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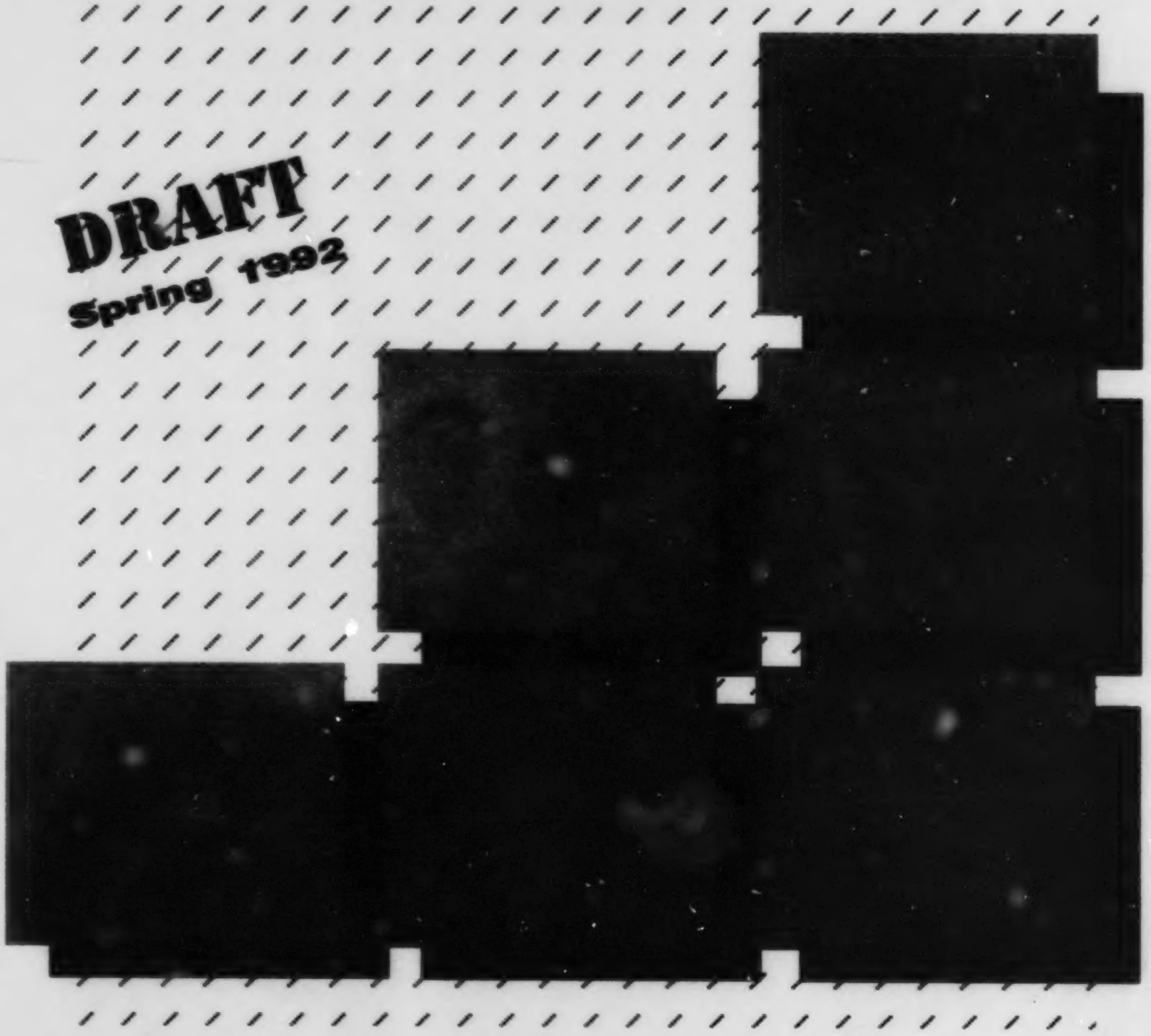
The Intermediate Program:



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Spring 1992

FOUNDATIONS

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND
MINISTRY RESPONSIBLE FOR MULTICULTURALISM
AND HUMAN RIGHTS

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Preface

The *Intermediate Program: Response Draft*, published in June 1990, presented ideas concerning education and school programming at the Intermediate level—for students from the fifth to eleventh years of school (present grades four through ten). The draft was intended to promote discussion and to provide an opportunity for respondents to participate in the creation of Provincial education policy.

Over 3500 separate responses to the initial draft were received from educators, representatives of various stakeholder groups, and other individuals interested in creating a shared vision for the future of schooling in British Columbia. An independent analysis of the letters, briefs, and questionnaires provided the members of the Intermediate Program Team and Steering Committee with a comprehensive profile of the advice offered. Analysis indicated support for the Intermediate Program philosophy and Goals and for the Program's focus on the learner. Responses also identified key issues, posed thoughtful questions, and suggested ways to better present the ideas.

This document incorporates the recommendations arising from the response process. It is being distributed in draft form for further discussion and final feedback. It provides an interpretation of the Goals of Education and the Principles set out in the *Year 2000: A Framework for Learning*. It also sets guidelines for the development of future resources.

The Intermediate Program: Foundations is not intended to be a curriculum guide, however. It provides a framework, a philosophy, goals, and a set of principles for designing learning opportunities for all students. Forthcoming Curriculum/Assessment Frameworks will describe the essential understandings of particular subjects. Together, *The Intermediate Program: Foundations* and the Curriculum/Assessment Frameworks will, in due course, after final development, constitute the mandated aspect of the Intermediate Program.

Additional support materials and the *Developing Images of Educational Change* kits (based on experiences in the Intermediate Program Developmental Sites) will also help educators plan learning opportunities. The Ministry believes that educators, students, and communities can make significant decisions about how to apply the framework to suit their situations, as they select from many different approaches that are best suited to their learners' needs.

Acknowledgments

The Ministry of Education and Ministry Responsible for Multiculturalism and Human Rights would like to acknowledge the work of the Intermediate Program Team and the Intermediate Program Steering Committee.

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The Ministry also wishes to acknowledge the many professional and support staff whose expertise and skills have proved so valuable in producing *The Intermediate Program: Foundations*. In particular, thanks are extended to Steven Feldman (the team's research assistant), Lynn Ostle, (support person for the team), and GT Publishing Services Ltd. of Vancouver (provided editorial and design assistance).

Finally, the Ministry thanks all those who welcomed the Program Team members into their schools, as well as those educators, parents, students, and members of the public who responded to *The Intermediate Program: Response Draft*. Their comments and suggestions greatly contributed to *The Intermediate Program: Foundations*.

Introduction

The Intermediate Program: Foundations describes policy and direction for the educational development of young people in the fifth through eleventh years of schooling in British Columbia. The Intermediate Program extends the experiences of the Primary years and provides a foundation for learning in the Graduation Program.

This document provides guidelines for teachers, administrators, resource developers, and others concerned with the education of those young people. Based on extensive consultation, deliberation, and research, this document sets out a foundation that recognizes the many excellent practices currently in place and that furthers the creation of educational environments and structures whereby these practices may become system-wide. It calls for changes that will enable all learners to be more successful and more likely to realize their fullest potential in the various domains of their individual and social lives.

At the same time, *The Intermediate Program: Foundations* seeks to help educators develop a shared vision and build toward a common culture across the Intermediate years. This intent will be met by the evolution of common language and by adoption of shared goals, compatible philosophy, and broad curriculum expectations for all students.

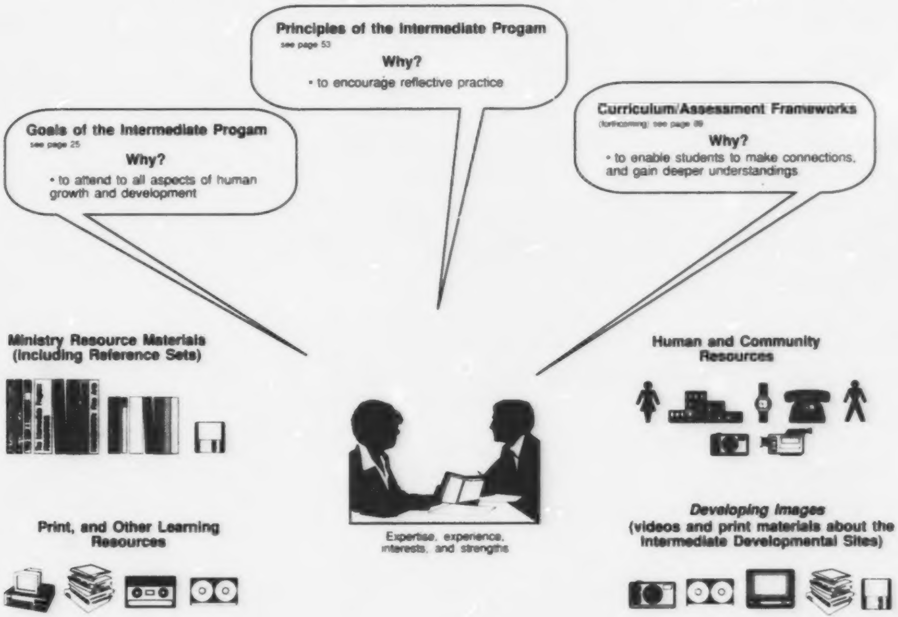
This document outlines and describes the elements educators should consider when making educational decisions. These are:

- the Goals of the Intermediate Program — intended to support all aspects of growth and development of young people

- the Principles of the Intermediate Program — intended to articulate tenets that support learning and the learner (these principles encourage reflective practice with a view to increasing students' engagement, heightening their motivation, and enhancing their ability to make meaning)
- The Curriculum/Assessment Frameworks — intended to articulate essential understandings of subjects so that educators can help students deepen their understanding and make connections (the Frameworks also provide guidance for assessing student learning).

In addition to applying these considerations, educators can draw upon their experiences and expertise to design learning opportunities, develop learning resources, and select from a variety of materials that support student learning.

Considerations for Educational Decision Making in the Intermediate Program


Principles of the Intermediate Progam see page 53 Why? • to encourage reflective practice
Goals of the Intermediate Progam see page 25 Why? • to attend to all aspects of human growth and development
Curriculum/Assessment Frameworks (forthcoming) see page 89 Why? • to enable students to make connections, and gain deeper understandings
Ministry Resource Materials (Including Reference Sets)
Human and Community Resources
Expertise, experience, interests, and strengths
Print, and Other Learning Resources
Developing Images (videos and print materials about the Intermediate Developmental Sites)

OVERVIEW OF THE INTERMEDIATE PROGRAM

The Intermediate Program honours the integrity of the learner and nurtures a disposition toward lifelong learning. Teaching that attends to the developmental needs of each young person enables learners to understand themselves and their world and to develop their capacities to think critically, communicate effectively, care deeply, and act wisely.

This Overview describes the nature and characteristics of the Intermediate Program. The Program is intended to provide a consistent framework for schooling. The variety of interpretations and decisions made by people in different educational contexts will give diverse form to the Program. To bring the Intermediate Program "to life," educators will need to exercise their professional judgment. As implementation begins, it is expected that groups of educators will begin the process by discussing features of the Program, assessing where and how to start, and planning together to realize their shared vision.

◆ The Intermediate Program is a program for all learners

The Intermediate Program is intended for students in public and independent schools, in English and French programs, as well as in situations where distance learning is a necessity or home schooling is a choice. It recognizes the individuality of each student and acknowledges the variety of circumstances that create the diversity reflected throughout the student population. Processes for reconciling and honouring individual differences and diversities are vital to the strength and preservation of democratic society. Policies of inclusiveness are an expression of this belief. It is accordingly important to adopt such policies, even where this presents special challenges for the school system. Circumstances of intellectual, physical, cultural, or social significance that may affect the learning opportunities of individuals or groups of students (e.g., students with special needs, ESL students, First Nations learners) must be addressed.

◆ The Intermediate Program is learner-focused

The Intermediate Program provides for different rates and styles of learning, and recognizes the individual learner's developmental needs and interests. Learner-focused curriculum and assessment practices are those that are developmentally appropriate, allow for continuous learning, provide for self-direction, meet individual learning needs, and deal with matters of relevance to learners. The Intermediate Program does not expect students to "cover" predetermined curricula within prescribed blocks of time. Educators can adopt a learner-focused approach by first ascertaining prior attitudes, skills, and knowledge. They then collaborate with students to select content, plan activities, support learning, and evaluate learners' progress.

◆ In the Intermediate Program, content is determined on the basis of Goals that attend to all aspects of human development and of Curriculum Intentions that outline the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to be addressed in the various subject areas

The overriding focus of the Intermediate Program is the common sense of purpose that educators share, regardless of subject specialization or assignment: to promote development in six areas:

- intellectual
- artistic and aesthetic
- emotional
- physical
- social
- social responsibility.

While the Goals of the Intermediate Program are interdependent, furthering intellectual development is recognized as the prime goal of education, supported by each of the other goals.

The Program Goals, Curriculum Intentions and Principles express what is valued and form the basis for planning learning opportunities. The Intermediate Program supports the role that subjects and disciplines play in the education of young people by prescribing Curriculum Intentions associated with specific subject areas. The Goals, Intentions and Principles provide the focus for assessing and evaluating students' development and for describing and reporting learning.

◆ The Intermediate Program stresses the importance of active learning

A major intent of the program is to highlight the fact that learning is not a passive act—that students' minds are not "empty vessels to be filled." Students need encouragement and opportunities to develop the competencies that can enable them to make sense of experience. Therefore, it is critical that students have opportunities to compare and contrast their understanding with that of others—their peers and teachers, as well as people beyond the school and thinkers of times past.

A second aspect of active learning is the emphasis placed on involving students in making decisions about their learning. This does not mean that students alone decide what will be learned in school. It does mean, however, that as they are increasingly able to assume responsibility, students will be encouraged to do so, and the nature of direction and guidance provided by the teacher will change.

◆ The Intermediate Program promotes assessment and evaluation that supports student learning

How students learn, and what they understand will vary. Learning may be represented in a variety of ways, and should be assessed and evaluated on an individual basis. Assessment and evaluation are embedded within learning experiences and are intended to inform teachers and students about students' learning and to facilitate educational decision making. By participating in the processes of assessment and evaluation, students become more aware of how and what they understand, further enabling them to take responsibility for their learning.

◆ The Intermediate Program is designed to promote possibilities for curricular integration

Curricular integration means many things, among them:

- establishing means by which school learning is related to young peoples' experiences beyond school and by which these interests and activities can be used in the school setting
- creating opportunities for students to make meaningful connections between the various content or skill elements addressed within a subject, between subjects, or within two or more related subjects.

Curricular integration can take many forms, none of which is prescribed by the Intermediate Program. Decisions about the form of curriculuar integration, and the degree to which skills or content are integrated, is a matter of educators' professional judgment.

◆ **The Intermediate Program expects students to assume increasing responsibility for setting high and demanding, but appropriate, standards for themselves**

It is by assuming this responsibility for learning that students best develop their individual potential. Fundamental intents of the Intermediate Program include improving the quality of school experiences for students, and improving the overall quality of the educational system. In the past, a generalized and uniform set of system standards for all students was viewed as the means of accomplishing these intents. However, the effect of such practice was often counter-productive: some students could never reach the imposed standards and became discouraged, while some very capable students were not always motivated to strive for excellence.

◆ **The Intermediate Program builds on the experiences of the Primary Program and provides a foundation for experiences in the Graduation Program**

The Primary Program is responsive to the needs of each learner. Recognition of individual variation requires that teachers plan developmentally appropriate experiences to accommodate differences in students' learning needs. The Intermediate Program continues to build on this developmental perspective.

Students' experiences in the Intermediate Program are also a foundation for the kinds of choices and challenges they will face in their Graduation years. For example, students in the Intermediate Program will have had opportunities over the course of seven years to make decisions, solve problems, and to reflect upon the consequences of their choices.

Students entering the Graduation Program will have had many opportunities to set goals, establish personalized standards, and excel in their achievements. Involvement in self-evaluation can enable them to learn from their mistakes and build upon their strengths. Self-esteem and disciplined habits of mind, together with knowledge of their own aptitudes, skills, and abilities, should enable Intermediate Program students to make appropriate decisions regarding their schooling and future aspirations.

◆ The Intermediate Program recognizes educators' professionalism and supports their autonomy in designing learning opportunities

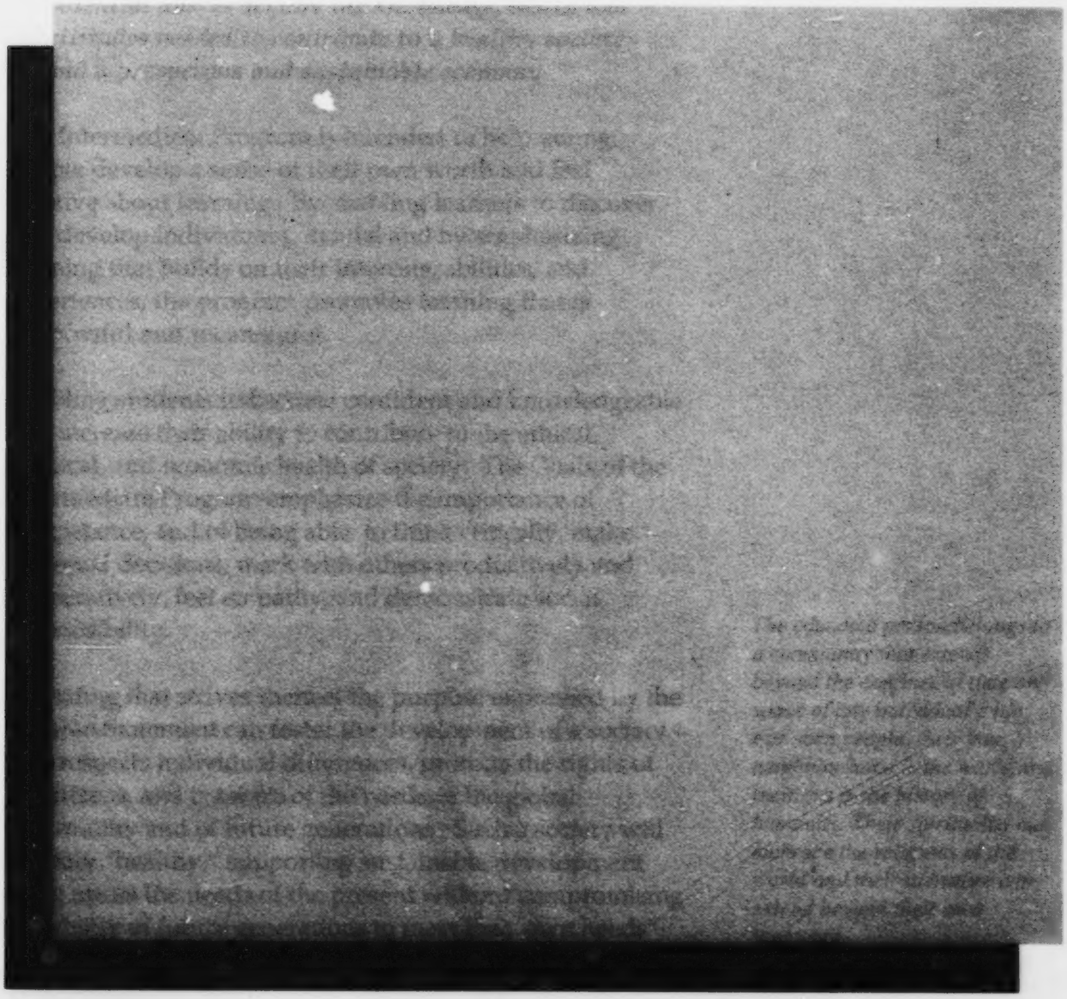
Today's educators are better qualified and more informed than they were in the past. They are faced with a more diverse student population and are expected to respond to circumstances that were previously ignored or non-existent.

Educators must be encouraged to do what they know will support learning. The Intermediate Program recognizes the professional judgment that teachers must exercise as they decide how best to utilize their own strengths, experiences, and interests in response to the needs of their students and society. This is particularly the case as educators adapt and interpret curriculum to provide the most appropriate learning opportunities for all students.

◆ The Intermediate Program promotes flexible organizational practices that are responsive to the needs of a community of learners

Greater consideration needs to be given to factors influencing the development of learning environments that can support students' success. Many educators are now considering how best to provide a climate of guidance, caring support, and expectations that students need. For example, educators are currently exploring classroom and school organizations that are flexible in size, composition, and duration in order to maximize the likelihood of participation for all students.

CONTEXT
OF THE INTERMEDIATE PROGRAM



Supporting the Mission

The Intermediate Program supports the Mission Statement for the British Columbia education system by enabling young people to develop as individuals and as participants in a democratic society.

> ***The purpose of the British Columbia school system is to enable learners to develop their individual potential and to acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to contribute to a healthy society and a prosperous and sustainable economy.***

The Intermediate Program is intended to help young people develop a sense of their own worth and feel positive about learning. By enabling learners to discover and develop individual potential and by emphasizing learning that builds on their interests, abilities, and experiences, the program promotes learning that is purposeful and meaningful.

Enabling students to become confident and knowledgeable will increase their ability to contribute to the ethical, political, and economic health of society. The Goals of the Intermediate Program emphasize the importance of competence, and of being able to think critically, make reasoned decisions, work with others productively and cooperatively, feel empathy, and demonstrate social responsibility.

Schooling that strives to meet the purpose expressed by the Mission Statement can foster the development of a society that respects individual differences, protects the rights of all citizens, and is aware of the needs of the global community and of future generations. Such a society will be truly "healthy," supporting sustainable development "that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987, p. 43).

> *The educated person belongs to a community that extends beyond the confines of time and space of any individual's life. For such people, their true neighbourhood is the world and their era is the history of humanity. Their spirituality can embrace the religions of the world and their literature can extend beyond their own language.*
>
> —Marx, P., and Grieve, T., 1988, p. 72

Educating Citizens

[We want] to try to produce not merely good learners but good people.

—Kohn, A., 1991, p. 497

To further the purposes of education in British Columbia, the Ministry of Education and Ministry Responsible for Multiculturalism and Human Rights has articulated a set of qualities that it is considered important for citizens to have in a diverse society. These qualities form the basis for describing the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to contribute to Canadian society and the global community. The Ministry describes educated citizens as people who are

- thoughtful, able to learn and to think critically, and to communicate information from a broad knowledge base
- creative, flexible, self-motivated and possessing a positive self-image
- capable of making independent decisions
- skilled and able to contribute to society generally, including the world of work
- productive, able to gain satisfaction through achievement and to strive for physical well being
- cooperative, principled and respectful of others regardless of differences
- aware of the rights and prepared to exercise the responsibilities of an individual within the family, the community, Canada, and the world.

The Intermediate Program is based on the belief that learning begins at birth and education is never completed. Characteristics that describe a person who is involved in lifelong learning may be found in a child of nine or an adult of ninety. Because of differences in learners' development, consciousness, and experience, however, these characteristics will be present in different forms as learners develop and grow. The Intermediate Program is intended to encourage young people to develop ways of being and habits of mind that demonstrate they understand what it means to be an educated citizen.

Furthering the Goals of Education

As part of its response to the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Education, 1988, the Ministry of Education and Ministry Responsible for Multiculturalism and Human Rights identified the following three Goals of Education:

- **Intellectual Development** — to develop the ability of students to analyze critically, reason and think independently, and acquire basic learning skills and bodies of knowledge; to develop in students a lifelong appreciation of learning, a curiosity about the world around them, and a capacity for creative thought and expression.

- **Human and Social Development** — to develop in students a sense of self-worth and personal initiative; to develop an appreciation of the fine arts and an understanding of cultural heritage; to develop an understanding of the importance of physical health and well being; to develop a sense of social responsibility, and a tolerance and respect for the ideas and beliefs of others.

- **Career Development** — to prepare students to attain their career and occupational objectives; to assist in the development of effective work habits and flexibility to deal with change in the workplace.

Schools, supported by the family and community, accept primary responsibility for the intellectual development of learners. Responsibility for the goals of human and social development and career development is shared by the school, family, and community.

The mistake is not in attaching importance to preparation for future need, but in making it the mainspring of present effort. Because the need of preparation for a continually developing life is great, it is imperative that every energy should be bent to making the present experience as rich and significant as possible. Then, as the present merges insensibly into the future, the future is taken care of.

—Dewey, J., 1916, p. 56

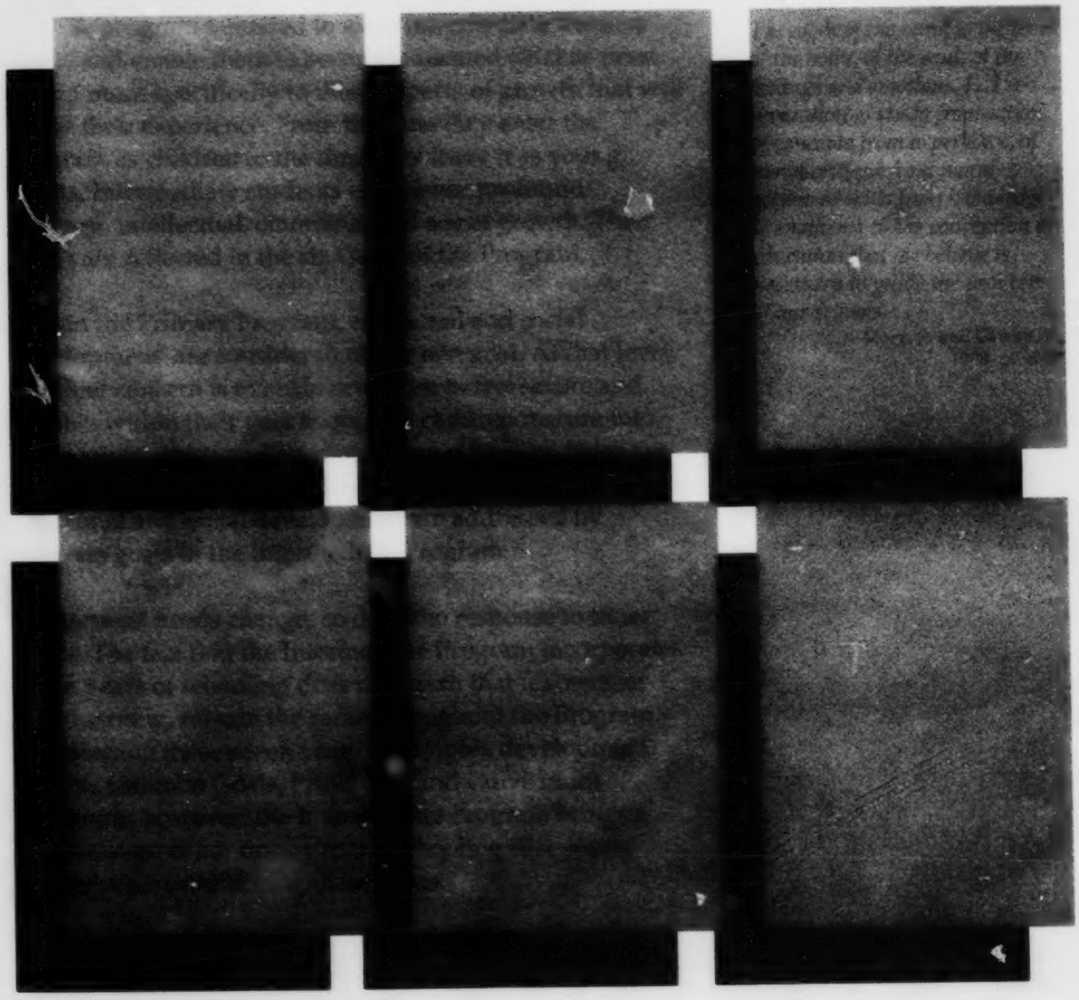
These goals are not seen as end-points that learners should achieve by the time they have completed the Graduation Program. Rather, they describe development that is considered important in the education of young people and that occurs as learners participate in school life.

The Goals of Education provide a continuity of purpose for learners in all three programs. As children grow and change and as they move from home to school to the adult world, the support they require and the challenges they face take different forms.

In the **Primary Program**, as children make the important transition from home to school, the support and involvement of the family and community are particularly important. Within the **Intermediate Program**, young people undergo transition from childhood to adolescence. The issues relevant to their development differ from those relevant to the development of primary students. Learners in the **Graduation Program** are challenged by their impending transition into the adult world. The roles of family and community assume different emphases as students develop greater autonomy and acquire the rights and responsibilities of citizens.

The differing ways in which schooling responds to learners who are at different stages of development are reflected in the goals developed specifically for each of the three programs. These goals therefore expand on the development of learners within each program under the overarching Goals of Education.

THE GOALS
OF THE INTERMEDIATE PROGRAM



> To be effective, an educational system must respond to children in ways that are suitable to their specific levels of intellectual, social, emotional, and physical development; this implies that these ways should change as children mature.
>
> —Sullivan, B., et al, 1988, p. 103

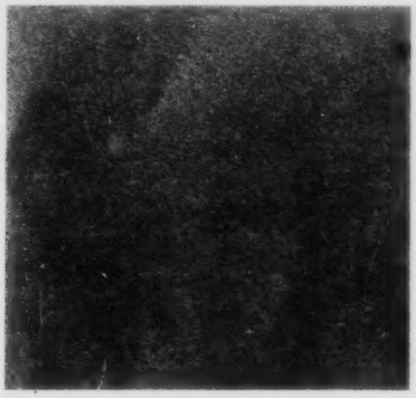
A program intended to meet Intermediate learners' needs and enable them to become educated citizens must attend more specifically to those aspects of growth that will shape their experience. From the time they enter the Program as children to the time they leave it as young adults, Intermediate students experience profound physical, intellectual, emotional and social growth. Their needs are reflected in the six Goals of the Program.

> *The work of the mind is the work of the body, of the soul, of the feelings and emotions. [...] A separation of study from action, of concepts from experience, of moral critique from moral action, of skills from knowledge is anathema to the conception of education that we believe is necessary to guide the programs of our schools.*
>
> —Marx, P. and Grieve, T., 1988, p. 86-87

Within the Primary Program, emotional and social development are considered under one goal. At that level, the chief concern is to enable children to feel secure and capable within their peer group. As children mature into adolescents, emotional and social issues become more complex. In recognition of this emergent complexity, emotional and social development are addressed by separate goals in the Intermediate Program.

As learners' needs change, so does the response to those needs. The fact that the Intermediate Program incorporates seven years of schooling does not mean that learners, or their learning, remain the same throughout the Program. By spanning these seven years of complex development with its common Goals, Principles, and Curriculum Intentions, however, the Intermediate Program brings a greater sense of continuity to the schooling that young people experience during those years.

All Program Goals are seen as interdependent and interrelated. Summarized, the Intermediate Program Goals are intended to further students'

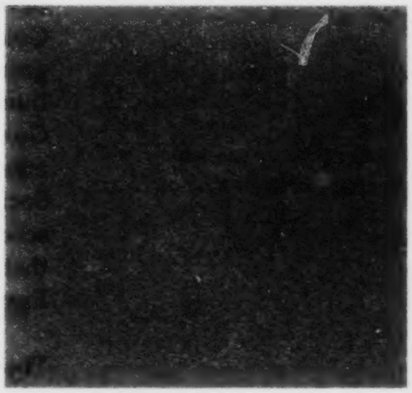


- **intellectual development** by providing learning opportunities that enable them to
  - learn in a variety of ways
  - communicate and express learning through a variety of forms
  - think critically, creatively, and reflectively
  - pursue questions, seek responses, and investigate problems
  - develop a shared foundation of knowledge
  - recognize and understand the connections between and among various forms of knowledge
  - access, evaluate, and utilize information effectively
  - make and justify decisions.

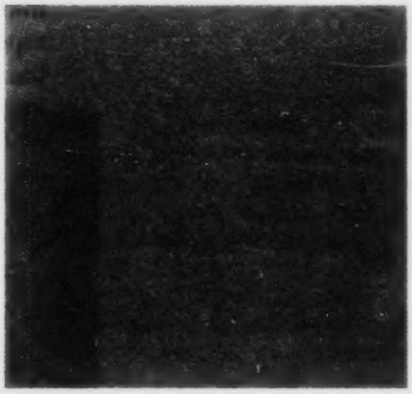
- **aesthetic and artistic development** by providing learning opportunities that enable them to
  - discover and respond to creative and imaginative expression
  - create
  - experience a sense of wonder
  - explore and express their human spirit
  - value the expressions of cultures
  - be aware of and appreciate the beauty of design.

- **emotional development** by providing learning opportunities that enable them to
  - develop a positive and realistic sense of self
  - develop independence and emotional security
  - understand and express feelings
  - be aware of and attend positively to feelings of stress
  - grow in empathy and compassion for others.

- **physical development** by providing learning opportunities that enable them to
    - understand and accept physical changes
    - respect and care for the body
    - develop and maintain physical well-being
    - develop motor coordination and technique
    - practise appropriate nutrition
    - develop sensory awareness.



- **social development** by providing learning opportunities that enable them to
    - respect and value individual differences
    - develop personal integrity and moral reasoning
    - develop positive interpersonal relationships
    - understand the effects of personal actions on others
    - resolve conflict in constructive ways
    - cooperate and collaborate
    - be sensitive to the feelings and rights of others.



- **social responsibility** by providing learning opportunities that enable them to
    - assume responsibility for personal actions and decisions
    - participate in and develop an understanding of a democratic Canadian society
    - be sensitive to and act with awareness of issues regarding human rights
    - value cultural identity and diversity
    - act with awareness of the needs of the environment and the global community
    - explore career options and appreciate the value of various forms of work
    - consider implications of technological development and societal change.

The Intermediate Program is based on the assumption that intellectual development involves the transformation of experiences into understanding. Accordingly, intellectual development is the prime goal of schooling. All Program Goals support intellectual development, and intellectual growth is an aspect of development in each goal area. Intellectual development is therefore, the first of the Program Goals discussed in the following pages, followed by the other Goals presented alphabetically. While the Goal of Social Responsibility makes explicit the responsibility of school, family, and community to enable learners to develop their awareness of career options, all the Intermediate Program Goals foster career development.

The Intermediate Program Goals have been derived from educators' experience and observations, and from research into the developmental needs of young people. Like other aspects of the Intermediate Program, the Goal statements are the result of a process of negotiation among individuals interested in creating a shared vision for Intermediate education. Each of the Goals is presented separately to allow for a discussion of its relevance to Intermediate learners.

Intellectual Development

Students' **intellectual development** is furthered by providing learning opportunities that enable them to

- learn in a variety of ways
- communicate and express learning through a variety of forms
- think critically, creatively, and reflectively
- pursue questions, seek responses, and investigate problems
- develop a shared foundation of knowledge
- recognize and understand the connections between and among various forms of knowledge
- access, evaluate, and utilize information effectively
- make and justify decisions.

❖

[illegible]

> *It is our view and, indeed, the view of many able educators that it is patently foolish to talk about content without process, or facts without thinking, and it is equally foolish to talk about process without content, or thinking without having something to think about.*
>
> —Sullivan, B., et al, 1988, p. 95

> *If you want young people to think, you ask them hard questions and let them wrestle with the answers. If you want them to analyze something, or interpret it or evaluate it, you ask them to do so and show them how to do it with increasing skill. If you want them to know how to approach interesting or difficult problems, you give them interesting or difficult problems and help them develop a conscious repertoire of problem-solving strategies. If you want them to think the way scientists or historians or mathematicians do, you show them how scientists and historians and mathematicians think, and you provide opportunities for them to practise and compare those ways of thinking.*
>
> —Brown, R.G., 1991, p. 233

Intellectual development is the underlying purpose for study in the Intermediate Program. Students may be intellectually engaged whether painting murals, conducting science experiments, researching historical events, or reading literature. The thoughtfulness that young people bring to the educative experience in large part determines the quality of the learning.

Intermediate students vary in their development and in the types of experience they bring to the classroom. Consequently, the ways in which they learn best may differ. To develop intellectual potential, the ways that young people think and express their learning should be valued and fostered. Wherever possible, different approaches to developing understanding of a concept should be provided, and different choices for representing their thinking and learning should be available.

As young people move into and through the Intermediate years, the ability to think critically and reason independently becomes increasingly important. Young people want to "belong" and can be influenced by peers and the media. Developing students' critical thinking abilities can enable learners to consider alternatives and make sound decisions. As well, learning how to recognize and formulate reasoned argument is relevant to students who are becoming more involved in the life of the community.

Developing creative thinking implies that students will be actively involved in pursuing questions, seeking responses, and investigating problems. Their creative abilities are fostered within a school culture that values individual diversity and the power of imagination, encourages intellectual risk-taking and provides time for them to concentrate on the question or problem at hand. Creative thinking does not flourish in an environment in which the solutions to a problem or the approaches to situations are predetermined. Rather, creative thinking requires an environment in which all minds are invited to explore possibilities and in which different perspectives are welcomed.

Providing opportunities for students to become conscious of growth in their understanding is part of the process of developing reflective thinking. Reflecting on their learning enables students to question their assumptions and to consider future actions. Such personal involvement contributes to self-esteem and fosters a desire to learn. Thinking critically, creatively, and reflectively cannot be separated from what is being studied or thought about. To develop breadth as well as depth of understanding, young people should become knowledgeable about subject matter in all program strands. The Intermediate Program is intended to help young people acquire a foundation of knowledge that will enable them to participate fully and equally in Canadian society. Intermediate learners are beginning to plan future education and careers. A broad education and a shared foundation of knowledge enables them to make informed decisions.

As well as developing knowledge, skills, and attitudes associated with the subjects, opportunities to promote students' understanding of the connections between and among various forms of knowledge should be pursued. Conceptual understandings that underlie different forms of knowledge should be highlighted. Issues and questions that do not fall under the rubric of any one subject area may form the basis of multidisciplinary study that links various forms of knowledge.

As well, in all areas of study, students should develop the abilities to access, evaluate, and utilize information effectively. Information literacy refers to the ability not only to gain access to an ever-expanding knowledge base, but to develop "techniques for exploring it, connecting it to other knowledge bases, and making practical use of it" (ALA Final report, 1989).

> *What is called for is not a new information studies curriculum, but rather a restructuring of the learning process. Such a learning process would actively involve students in recognizing a need for information, finding and identifying the needed information, evaluating it, organizing it, and using it effectively to address the problem or need at hand.*
>
> *Such a restructuring of the learning process will not only enhance the critical thinking skills of students, but also will empower them for lifelong learning and the effective performance of professional and civic responsibilities.*
>
> —Breivik, P., 1991, p. 5-6

With respect to decision making, the intellectual development of Intermediate learners is related to emotional and social maturity. This has significant impact on the types of decisions a particular learner can be expected to be able to make. Planning a class field trip and choosing an option within the Graduation Program both require the consideration of many factors. The latter decision, however, requires greater maturity and responsibility. All learners will make decisions in the Intermediate Program, but the complexity of the decision, the degree of responsibility, and the level of challenge should be developmentally appropriate.

Aesthetic and Artistic Development

Students' **aesthetic and artistic development** is furthered by providing learning opportunities that enable them to

- discover and respond to creative and imaginative expression
- create
- experience a sense of wonder
- explore and express their human spirit
- value the expressions of cultures
- be aware of and appreciate design.

❖

(Photo to be inserted in final draft)

While the arts are considered important for the stimulation of the imagination, we want to see its action in mathematics and the sciences no less than in painting and composing.
—Egan, K. and Nadaner, D., 1988, p. 91

Young people in the Intermediate years require opportunities to explore the range of ideas, feelings, and thoughts in various forms of creative expression. Enabling students to discover and respond to powerful insights introduces them to different ways of perceiving the world and the diversity of human experience. For Intermediate learners, these chances to broaden their understandings vicariously are important not only to their aesthetic and artistic development, but also to their emotional, intellectual, physical, and social development, and to the development of social responsibility.

The arts are not only for communicating ideas. They are ways of having ideas, of creating ideas, of exploring experience in particular ways and fashioning our understanding of it into new forms.
—Robinson, K., 1989, p. 22

Equally important to learners are opportunities to express their own imaginative and creative powers in a variety of forms. The Intermediate Program values the creativity that exists in all learners as a particular form of intellectual activity. Creative expression produces meaning. Young people who discover and explore their own creativity are engaged in conscious attempts to know new things about themselves, their experiences, and the world in which they live. Creative intuition and imagination play an important role in achieving new insights and new solutions to problems. Learning opportunities that value intuitive and imaginative ways of knowing foster development by encouraging young people to play with ideas, to recognize "that sudden, direct knowing of something that does not follow directly from conscious reasoning" (Buerk, D., 1990, p. 6).

A sense of wonder is closely related to intuitive and imaginative experience. Aesthetic and artistic development incorporates both intellectual and emotional elements. The term "wonder" is intended to express this integration of thought and feeling. Intermediate learners, as emotional beings exploring their sense of self and the world, need opportunities to experience wonder and to ask profound questions that stimulate artistic and aesthetic responses.

The experience of wonder and the asking of profound questions contributes to the development of the human spirit. In the early Intermediate years, children express this spirit through play and make-believe. Through learning experiences that foster aesthetic and artistic development, their unique qualities and characteristics may find expression in a personal style. By the time learners are in the later years of the program, their burgeoning idealism and, for some, sense of identity, may direct them to explore their own style and spirit in relation to those of other individuals and cultures.

Developing an appreciation for the expressions of cultures is a complex and crucial task of aesthetic education. Culture has been described as lived, recorded, or selective. Lived cultures are fully experienced only by the people who exist in the space and time in which the culture is created. Recorded cultures include all of the artifacts and records of life that have survived from a particular time period. Selective culture concentrates on what are considered at any one time to be the most significant works of particular cultures. (Williams, R., 1971, p. 66). Each of these descriptions of culture offers rich opportunities to learn about the world and its peoples. All of the descriptions of culture are important to aesthetic and artistic appreciation.

Becoming aware of design also requires attention to the beliefs and ideas of different cultural groups. Design relates the form of a product or natural organism to its purpose or function. When mathematicians describe the solution to a problem as "elegant," they are remarking on the aesthetic appeal of the solution's design. Learning experiences that consider the design of a product or organism in relation to its cultural or natural context foster aesthetic and artistic development.

The goal of aesthetic and artistic development, like all other goals, is important to learning experiences in all subject areas. Just as the Fine Arts strand is concerned with development in all goal areas, so are all other strands concerned with developing the imaginative, creative, and artistic spirits of young learners.

Emotional Development

Students' **emotional development** is furthered by providing learning opportunities that enable them to

- develop a positive and realistic sense of self
- develop independence and emotional security
- understand and express feelings
- attend to feelings and circumstances that cause or are a result of stress
- grow in empathy and compassion for others.

◆

Throughout the Intermediate Program, most learners become aware of themselves as individuals in their own right. During the first years of the Program, young people are developing the ability to think about who they are and to assess both their shortcomings and strengths. The tendency of children during this stage is to gauge their worth in relation to whatever skills and abilities are valued within their environment. Consequently, while the period before puberty is often characterized by relative emotional stability, it is nonetheless critical to the development of a positive sense of self.

...adolescents are struggling to form more comprehensive answers to the question:" Who am I?" Their new intellectual capabilities are applied to—indeed, permit—that question. Ethically, they are trying to answer it; in the development of new competencies, and in the context of their relationship with peers, this is also the case. Because this question is a central one developmentally, it must also be a basic focus of education.

—Mosher, R., 1980, p. 35

Young people in the early Intermediate years who are busily trying to learn what they believe is most important can develop a view of themselves as either competent or incompetent—views that affect their potential to learn. Learning opportunities in the Intermediate Program should enable all young people to think of themselves as competent. Acknowledging and respecting the different ways in which people learn encourages young people to build upon their strengths and thereby develop positive and realistic self-concepts.

As Intermediate learners approach adolescence, their development takes the form of a search for personal identity that takes into account their preferences, values, traits, and other attributes. The intellectual abilities they are developing make adolescents more likely to assess themselves in relation to their peers. For many, the sense of self that they construct is not a positive one. They may not value their own abilities, appearances, or experience, especially when compared to those of their peers.

Self-esteem is most likely fostered in environments that are "characterized by democratic procedures, personalness, respect, self-discipline, interaction and flexibility" (Beane, 1979). The recognition of learners as unique individuals with diverse learning needs contributes to the creation of such environments. As well, the Intermediate Program supports the use of assessment and evaluation practices that help young people to recognize and value their abilities as learners and that identify and value what they have learned.

Another facilitating procedure [to enhance self-esteem] would appear to be increased use of self-evaluation by learners. Under the guidance of the teacher, this process would offer students an opportunity to assess the nature of their work, thus contributing to a personal clarification of the self as learner or class participant.

—Beane, J., 1979, p. 41

Establishing social connections with peers strongly influences adolescents' sense of self-esteem and the development of social skills. The process of becoming a member of one or more peer groups presents a number of challenges to adolescents. Along with their strong need to be liked and included, adolescents must clarify in their own minds with whom they wish to identify, and they must evaluate the social implications of their own personalities (Palomares and Ball, 1980).

By offering membership, the peer group provides an identity to adolescents, expanding their feelings of self-worth and protecting them from loneliness (Palomares and Ball, 1980).

—Hargreaves, A., and Earl, L., 1990, p.21-22

Students of this age group may attempt to show their independence from family or other "authority" figures by adopting behaviours they associate with adult status and maturity. If young people develop a sense of self that is positive and realistic, however, they are more likely to conduct their search for independence in constructive ways. Learning activities in all years of the Program can provide opportunities for young people to experience independence within a secure environment. Taking responsibility within the school through peer-helper programs, class meetings, or involvement in planning school events, gives students means of expressing their independence creatively and constructively.

Opportunities for learners to understand and express their emotions are also necessary to young people at the Intermediate level. If students can identify their emotional states they may begin to examine why they feel the way they do and to understand how they might respond to particular circumstances or events.

Learning to understand and express their feelings should help young people deal with everyday pressures and stressful situations. Learning opportunities that enable students to be assertive in their interactions may help to prevent feelings of stress. Some events that occur within the lives of young people, however, are beyond the power of either the student or the school to prevent. Young people who experience the death of a friend or family member, for example, are caught in a stressful situation in which they may need help from school counsellors or community specialists. Intermediate learners should know what services are available to them, and they should recognize that it is both necessary and appropriate for them to ask for the support they need.

Emotional development is not only concerned with one's own sense of security and identity, but also with developing compassion and empathy for others. Those young people who develop a strong sense of self, however, are also capable of seeing other people's perspectives and incorporating these perspectives into their understanding and behaviour. These individuals are emotionally healthy beings who are capable of contributing to a healthy society.

Young people with high self-esteem look at situations from a single perspective that includes both themselves and others. They look at situations from the standpoint of what it means to their self-respect and to the respect others have for them.
—Elkind, D., 1984, p. 165

What is Self-esteem?

Self-esteem is:

- learned
- the combination of self-confidence and self-respect
- accepting one's strengths and weaknesses
- the ability to laugh at oneself, forgive oneself, and give oneself the time, attention, praise, and respect that one has been taught to give to others
- knowing that one is valuable because one exists.

Self-esteem:

- is what allows one to become genuinely involved in life and the lives of other people
- allows one to maintain one's personal boundaries and to value one's separate uniqueness
- allows one to be who one chooses to be, capable of change, of making mistakes, and of doing wonderful things.

—Adapted from *Personal Growth: Humanities Resource Book (Primary and Intermediate)*, 1990, p. 15

Physical Development

Students' **physical development** is furthered by providing learning opportunities that enable them to

- understand and accept physical changes
- respect and care for the body
- practise appropriate nutrition
- develop and maintain physical well-being
- develop motor coordination and technique
- develop sensory awareness.

❖

[illegible]

During the Intermediate years, most young people move from a period of relatively gradual physical growth to a period of more rapid physical growth. The coordination, increasing muscle control, and high energy level of children in the early years of the Program may give way to the awkwardness, lethargy, and restlessness of the adolescent. With the onset of puberty, young people may also become more self-conscious about their bodies. Many young people feel clumsy and self-conscious as they become more concerned about how they appear to others. Some students, particularly those who are physically disabled or members of a racial minority, may worry about differences in physical appearance. All students benefit from learning experiences that lead to appreciation of physical differences and the understanding that each individual is unique.

> *Puberty presents teenagers with a series of unknown changes, and each one constitutes a peril of puberty.*
>
> —Elkind, D., 1971, p. 45

The physical changes that signify sexual development are often accompanied by emotional upheaval. Helping young people to understand what is happening to their bodies is one of the first steps to providing reassurance. By providing opportunities for young people to learn about physical changes which occur at different times and in different ways, the Intermediate Program may help alleviate some of the stress associated with these changes.

The practice of appropriate nutrition is critical during this time of rapid growth and change. Yet often young people develop poor eating habits due to stress, insecurity, or lack of knowledge about their nutritional needs. Appropriate nutritional practices should be encouraged throughout the schooling experiences of young people.

Of particular importance to young people in the Intermediate Program are learning experiences that support the formation of positive feelings about themselves and their bodies. The image of the "perfect" body that is marketed by the media can be dangerous to young people formulating their identities. Young people who are already self-conscious can easily develop feelings of physical inadequacy that affect their emotional well-being. As an example, problems such as eating disorders illustrate the interdependence of emotional and physical health.

To respect and care for the body requires integration of emotional and physical aspects of self as well as understanding of societal pressures. Intellectual awareness will not prevent some young people from acting disrespectfully towards their own or others' bodies. Students' respect and care for the body will be enhanced by learning experiences that foster the development of positive self-esteem and a concern with the effects of one's actions upon self and others.

Respecting and caring for the body also implies that young people in the Intermediate years develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that can lead to lifelong interest in physical well-being. Participation in physical activities on a daily basis can help to develop an appreciation of the joy of human movement and the benefits of healthful exercise. While physical education is primarily concerned with the importance of physical activity and well-being, the development of physical well-being, motor co-ordination and physical technique is important in all subject areas.

Providing appropriate opportunities for students to be physically active may also help to develop sensory awareness. The learning that occurs from "hands-on" activity is an important aspect of intellectual development. Experiences that expand sensory awareness and are appropriate within the Intermediate Program might include exploring the different textures, scents, and sounds in an ecosystem, discovering tessellations in nature or architecture, or mapping a section of the school grounds or neighbourhood.

Social Development

Students' **social development** is furthered by providing learning opportunities that enable them to

- respect and value individual differences
- develop personal integrity and moral reasoning
- develop positive interpersonal relationships
- understand the effects of personal actions on others
- resolve conflict in constructive ways
- cooperate and collaborate
- be sensitive to the feelings and rights of others.

◆

[illegible]

Having children learn from one another creates powerful bonds between them and sends a message very different from that sent by a classroom in which each child is on his/her own.

—Kohn, A., 1991, p. 504

Young people in the Intermediate years are discovering who they are and where they belong. At school, they continue to meet peers and adults whose personal and cultural backgrounds differ from their own. The media expose learners to an even broader range of societal influences. With guidance and support from educators and families, these experiences can help students develop awareness of and respect for individual differences. Opportunities that encourage students to explore and discuss various viewpoints and beliefs can help them to become more sensitive in their relationships with others.

In order to develop individual responsibility while respecting individual differences, the Intermediate Program encourages young people to develop socially-constructive values. Opportunities to consider why qualities such as kindness, empathy, and honesty are important to healthy social relations help to develop the personal integrity and moral reasoning that enable students to be ethical and responsible in their actions. For many learners, a poor self-concept may have led to over-dependency on others for acceptance and identity. These young people, in particular, need assistance in developing the ability to make judgments that build upon feelings of self-worth and lead to positive participation in social relations.

Peer pressure is not so much an actual pressure by one person or a group in order to get another to behave in a certain way, but it is often the self-imposed pressure an individual feels to behave like others in order to feel a part of the group.

—Kaiser Substance Abuse Foundation, Draft, April 1991, p. 45

For Intermediate learners, the ability to develop positive interpersonal relationships is a most important skill. The desire to belong to a peer group is strong among Intermediate learners. As young people mature and develop new interests, they sometimes find themselves cut off from former friendships and in need of emotional support. Classroom activities that take advantage of students' desire to make new friends and socialize can help students develop positive self-concepts and attitudes towards learning. Moreover, learning how to get along with others is important not only to students' experiences within school, but also to their future careers and personal relations.

As young people mature, they are held more accountable for their actions. In their growth towards independence, however, the desire for security and the desire for independence are often in conflict, causing young people to struggle between the influence of the peer group and that of the family or school system. In learning responsible behaviour Intermediate learners may need guidance in understanding the effects of their personal actions on others. As well, they may need to learn means of solving their conflicts constructively.

Learning how to cooperate and collaborate is important to Intermediate learners if they are to work productively with their peers as well as with other members of the community. Developing the skills and processes that help a group to function effectively enables students to work with people from diverse backgrounds and abilities, thereby preparing them for a successful life in the community.

The ability to cooperate and collaborate requires that learners develop sensitivity to the feelings and rights of others. Students learn to be sensitive to others within a compassionate and respectful environment. Educators' and students' interactions should therefore reflect a climate of mutual respect, where all ideas and opinions are valued and treated with dignity. Listening to others to understand what they are thinking, speaking with respect for other people's worth, demonstrating empathy for someone else's situation, are all indications that the young people involved are developing the characteristics of educated citizens who are cooperative, principled, and respectful of others, regardless of differences.

The need for independence and the need for security are the horns of the adolescent dilemma[....]The challenge of educating early adolescents is most especially one of meeting their personal, social, and developmental needs and of establishing the implications of their educational experiences for them as future adult citizens in our society.

—Hargreaves, A. and Earl, L., 1990, p. 25

Development of Social Responsibility

Students' sense of **social responsibility** is furthered by providing learning opportunities that enable them to

- assume responsibility for personal actions and decisions
- participate in and develop an understanding of a democratic, Canadian society
- be sensitive to and act with awareness of issues regarding human rights
- value cultural identity and diversity
- act with awareness of the needs of the environment and the global community
- explore career options and appreciate the value of various forms of work
- consider implications of technological development and societal change.

◆

During their Intermediate years, young people can be very idealistic. Their developing intellectual powers enable them to move beyond present reality to visualize future possibilities and ideal situations. Consequently, young people may appear highly critical of actions, appearances, or opinions of others. They may not, however, adopt the same critical stance when considering their own behaviours. Often, if the ideals expressed by young people are not realized, they do not relate their disappointment to their own actions. Students who try to raise funds for a worthy cause but who forget to advertise their fund-raising event may feel that poor turn-out is due to lack of support for their efforts rather than to poor organizational skills. The Intermediate Program should help young people to understand that their personal actions and decisions have an impact upon the realization of their intents.

It is important to develop understanding of Canadian society and democratic processes. Opportunities to participate in democratic decision-making may range from the organization of class meetings to the study of local and/or national political issues. Learning about Canada's social fabric implies that as part of their experiences, students should develop an appreciation for the rights of all people. It also implies that they should develop sensitivity to factors—including their own actions—that affect individual opportunity. Discussing and understanding issues related to gender, culture, race, religion, and disability are of critical importance. Awareness of the uniqueness and equality of every person, regardless of preconceptions or stereotyping, can help young people to value individual human rights, cultural identity, and diversity. The Intermediate Program consequently encourages learning experiences that acknowledge the contributions to society of both women and men, as well as various cultures, races, religions, and abilities. As part of their schooling, young people should be enabled to act with regard to the principles that are enshrined within the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Education and communication are vitally important in order to impress each individual of his or her responsibility regarding the healthy future of the earth. The best way for students to recognize that their action can make a difference is to have projects organized by the school or community on which the students can work. Once convinced that they can help, people tend to change both their attitude and behaviour. New attitudes towards the environment will be reflected in decisions at home and in corporate boardrooms around the world.

—Vanessa Allison, Student,
World Commission on
Environment and Development,
1987, p.112

Discussion of international issues also provides an opportunity for students to develop a more acute sense of social responsibility. Many young people have voiced concern over global issues such as environmental damage, world hunger, or political repression. Understanding the context in which these problems exist means that young people begin to consider how their own actions might have impact. For example, students who oppose industrial pollution but waste resources may benefit from learning experiences that demonstrate how they share responsibility for the well-being of the planet. Intermediate learners may contribute to the solution of problems concerned with the environment and the global community through actions in their schools and communities. The contributions these learners make through classroom or extracurricular activities or community service may in turn be acknowledged by supportive adults.

Younger students have babysitting jobs, deliver papers, collect bottles, papers and cans for recycling, cut lawns or do odd jobs around the neighbourhood. Older students do the same, but many more secondary students have regular part-time work, or in some cases, full-time evening and weekend jobs. Most students work full or part-time during the summer months as well. In addition to paid work, about one-third of the students do volunteer work in hospitals, senior citizens homes, and for elderly neighbours and relatives.

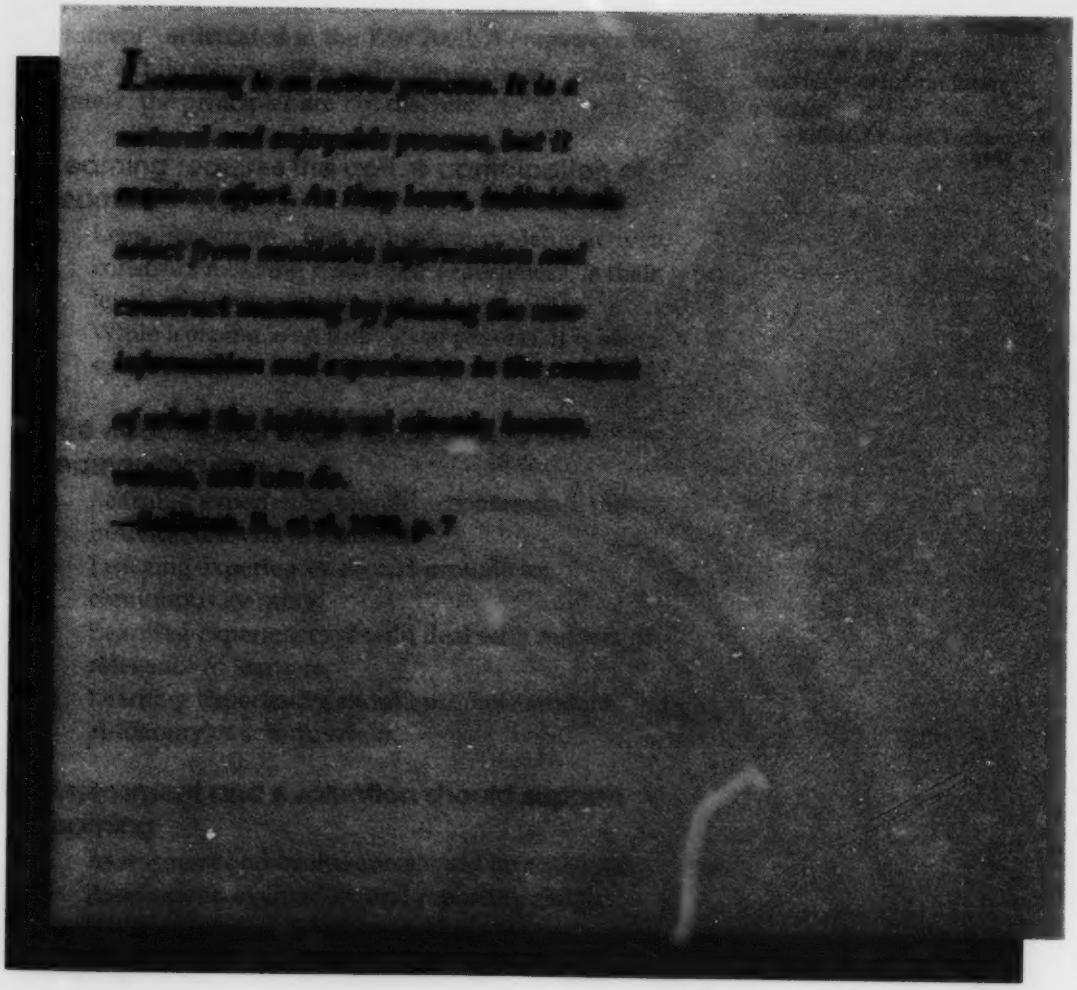
—Marx, R., and Grieve, T.,
1988, p. 61

As young people gain responsibility outside the home, career development becomes more immediately relevant to their lives. While continuing to develop independence and the ability to work cooperatively and collaboratively, many Intermediate learners are also beginning to show personal interest in the world of work. All Intermediate learners should be exposed to different options and experiences throughout the seven years of the program. Recognition of the contributions made to society by various trades, professions, service industries, andvolunteer organizations may be incorporated into learning experiences in all subject areas.

In order for students to see the broadest range of personal possibilities, the Intermediate Program encourages them to explore both traditional and non-traditional career options. Particularly in the later years of the Program, the guidance and advice of counsellors, other educators, and parent/guardians should help learners to enter the Graduation Program with a greater awareness of the range of career possibilities and of the requirements for entry into various professions, trades, and vocations.

The significance of technological developments and their impact on the environment and society need to be addressed by students, so that they are aware of ethical issues facing society as a consequence of such developments. As well, students need to appreciate that over-dependence on technology may be at the expense of using their own human resources and developing their own potential. In this regard, guidance from educators and parents/guardians should assist Intermediate learners to become empowered, responsible, and ethical in their actions.

PRINCIPLES
OF THE INTERMEDIATE PROGRAM



> *Learning is an active process. It is a natural and enjoyable process, but it requires effort. As they learn, individuals select from available information and construct meaning by placing the new information and experience in the context of what the individual already knows, values, and can do.*
>
> *—[illegible], et al., [illegible], p. 7*

The Principles of the Intermediate Program express what we know about learning and learners. This knowledge has been articulated as a set of Principles in order to encourage educators to reflect upon their own practice. Understanding and reflecting upon these principles should enable educators to develop appropriate structures, approaches, and procedures to support student learning. The Program Principles are based on the "Principles of Learning and the Learner" and the "Principles of Curriculum and Assessment" articulated in the *Year 2000: A Framework for Learning*. While it is possible to discuss each principle separately, the principles are not discrete.

> *Reflection is a gift we give ourselves, not passive thought that lolls aimlessly in our minds, but an effort we must approach with rigor, with some purpose in mind, and in some formal way, so as to reveal the wisdom embedded in our experience. Through reflection, we develop context-specific theories that further our own understanding of our work and generate knowledge to inform future practice.*
>
> —Killion, J.P., and Todnem, G.R., 1991, p. 14

- **Learning requires the active participation of learners**
  - Learning requires that individual students actively construct meaning from their experiences as their levels of development permit.
  - While learning is an individual process, it is also a social process.

- **The educational experience should be learner-focused**
  - Learning experiences should accommodate the individual needs of students.
  - Learning experiences should provide for continuous learning.
  - Learning experiences should deal with matters of relevance to learners.
  - Learning experiences should promote student autonomy or self-direction.

- **Assessment and evaluation should support learning**
  - Assessment and evaluation should be authentic.
  - Assessment, evaluation, and reporting should facilitate informed decision making.

- **The Intermediate Program is a program for all learners**
    - The program is committed to gender equity and promoting healthy multicultural and race relations.
    - The program is committed to full inclusion of all learners. It recognizes the worth of each and the value of contributions that have and can be made by all people.

[illegible]

Learning Requires the Active Participation of Learners

Active learning implies that students are intellectually and emotionally engaged in and by their learning. This means that learners are not viewed as passive recipients of factual information, but as agents of their own understandings and as active participants in a community of learners.

Once students' interest has been engaged and a climate for learning has been established, opportunities readily arise to further the process by incorporating their interests and ideas into classroom activities and events. Students' comments in *The Learners of British Columbia* indicate they learn best when they

- sense that their individual differences are attended to
- have opportunities to clarify their understanding
- experience positive relationships with their teachers
- participate actively in the learning process.

Barnes (1989) identified seven criteria for active learning. The first four criteria pertain to the students' participation in learning activities. The latter three are concerned with authentic experiences. The criteria can be summarized as follows:

- Learning must be purposeful.
- Purposeful learning is often reflective.
- Negotiating learning and assignments with students is a strategy to ensure that learning is purposeful.
- Learning involves critical analysis.
- Learning ought to challenge students with complex problem-solving and decision-making questions and dilemmas.
- Learning is situation-driven. That is, what is learned, and when something is learned, depend upon the student's immediate requirements.
- Students are engaged in and by their learning. This means that what students are learning about is of real interest to them and that they have opportunities to be actively involved in the community beyond the school.

—adapted from Barnes, D., 1989.

◆ Learning requires that individual students actively construct meaning from their experiences as their levels of development permit

In order to know something one must act upon it and transform or change it in some way— [...] active construction through interaction.
—Arlin, P., 1989, p. 142

Although several students may read the same book, go together on a field trip, or conduct a single science experiment using similar equipment, the nature and impact of the experience will be unique for each. Learning implies that a student has made sense of the activity by relating the new experiences, or ideas, to what is already known, or familiar. In other words, as students acquire new information and filter it through prior knowledge, they transform their individual beliefs into deeper, more coherent understandings. Consequently, prior experiences and background knowledge, as well as abilities and interests, affect the sense each student makes of his or her world.

In an important respect, what is learned is unique to, and the product of each individual. Certainly, teaching involves initiating young people into the world of shared understandings and facilitating their participation in well-established communities of thought. But while this initiation is an important intellectual stepping stone, learners should be encouraged to make sense of and to challenge what has been considered "established." Thus, although each individual is responsible for his or her own meaning making, it need not amount to uninformed and undisciplined speculations.

If learners proceed by trying to relate what they are learning to what they already know, then what they already know will strongly influence what they learn.
—Marx, R. and Grieve, T., 1988, p. 85

Recognizing that students must be individually encouraged to make sense of their experiences as their levels of development permit has profound implications for teaching. Building upon what is known permits students to learn more easily and more thoroughly. If the material is devoid of meaning for a student, or if that student cannot make sense of the material, then learning becomes unnecessarily difficult, and what is learned is superficial.

Since what is learned depends upon prior knowledge, teachers may begin to form their intentions and plans by seeking information about what students already know. To do this, teachers will need to observe students as learning experiences occur to assess each individual's understanding. Student self-evaluation can also be helpful in this regard. Generally speaking, students will become more effective learners—that is, create or uncover deeper insights—if they acquire the ability and disposition to reflect in thoughtful and disciplined ways on what they experience. Some basic strategies for encouraging this kind of reflection include "paraphrasing, summarizing, creating mental images, grouping or ordering material to be learned, outlining, creating hierarchies, checking for failures at comprehension, and maintaining an alert and relaxed composure" (Marx, R., and Grieve, T., 1988, p. 85). By engaging students in clarifying their understanding, exploring their thinking, and challenging their own beliefs and those of others, teachers can assist in students' development as powerful thinkers and independent learners. Teachers can encourage students to see their experience and interests as relevant and more meaningful by designing assessment activities that explicitly invite them to make connections between their prior assumptions and present experiences.

> *It is the teacher who creates opportunities for students to learn, to make sense of their world, to share and respond. Active learning celebrates both the role of the teacher and the student in learning.*
>
> —B.C. English Teachers' Association, 1990

Active participation in learning can take many forms. Students may be working individually on a research project or planning with other members of the class. They could be answering questions posed to the class, or they may be discussing and formulating questions of their own. At times, students will be physically active as they create, perform, experiment, build models, or use materials that facilitate their understanding of particular concepts. At other times, students may appear passive, perhaps while reading a book, observing others, watching a video, listening to a speaker, or reflecting on their work. It is engaged, thoughtful reflection about what is being learned or about learning itself that is a hallmark of active participation.

> *[Students] must become active learners, challenged to apply their prior knowledge and experience in new and increasingly [...]difficult situations. Instrucional approaches should engage students in the process of learning rather than transmit information for them to receive.*
>
> —National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, 1989, p. 67

◆ While learning is an individual process, it is also a social process

Personal learning is enhanced by interaction with others. Discussion and collaboration with teachers, peers, parents/guardians, or other members of the wider community help students clarify their thinking and deepen their understanding. Opportunities for students to share their work with a wider audience can make learning experiences more purposeful and meaningful. Peer evaluations, as a complement to teachers' evaluations provide a wider perspective on the student's capabilities and further enhance the social aspects of learning.

By listening to students' ideas and encouraging them to listen to one another, one can establish an atmosphere of mutual respect. Teachers can foster this willingness to share by helping students explore a variety of ideas in reaching solutions and verifying their own thinking. This approach instills in students an understanding of the value of independent learning and judgements, and discourages them from relying on an outside authority to tell them whether they are right or wrong.
—National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, 1989, p. 69

While learning is an individual process, this does not mean that instruction must therefore be individualized for each student, or that all students must have individualized educational programs. Likewise, the fact that learning is a social process does not mean that students should always be working in group situations. There must be balance. Opportunities to work independently and in group situations should be intermingled and should occur in various forms. Most importantly, students must be provided with ample opportunities to reflect on their learning—alone, and together with others.

The Educational Experience Should be Learner-Focused

In a learner-focused program, students' best educational interests are central concerns in all decision making. In the past, it seemed that administrative or institutional considerations often had priority over what students required to develop personally and as productive citizens. Implied in making learners the central focus of the program are commitments to

- accommodating the individual needs of students, including recognizing different ways and rates of learning
- providing for continuous learning
- promoting learner autonomy and self-direction
- increasing the relevance of students' experiences.

All learners' programs should be personalized as much as possible—to match individual interests and preferences for ways of learning as well as individual rates of learning. Personalized learning refers to the goal of organizing learning experiences and selecting teaching methods in such a way that learners can be challenged and motivated, and their learning can be most fully supported.

If students do not learn the way we teach them, then we must teach them the way they learn.
—Marshall, C., 1991, p. 226

◆ Learning experiences should accommodate the individual needs of students

To assume that all students should learn the same material, in the same way, and at the same time contradicts current understanding of intellectual growth and development. Students are not all at "the same place" at the same time. Nor do they all reach "the same place" in the same amount of time. Ways and rates of learning differ from person to person, and can also vary for a single individual.

The intents of the program appear to look at the needs of each student, not simply the needs of a group of people who happen to be held together by the same chronological age.
—Staff of an Elementary School, 1990

Human variation is such that we are always faced with groups of unstandardizable children. Their welfare requires that teachers be sensitive to individual differences in learning capacity and to the previous experiences that these children bring to school. It also requires that teachers, as professional practitioners, find ways to adjust educational experiences to accommodate these differences.

—Doyle, R.P., 1989, p. 220

The rate at which someone learns, depends upon his or her involvement and motivation. The rate of learning is also often influenced by the nature of the material to be learned. Intellectual abilities and physiological capabilities affect how, and how quickly, learning occurs. The challenge is to know students well and to provide each with appropriate learning opportunities. Teachers can accommodate the various ways and rates of learning by using differentiated assignments, making it possible for students to represent their learning in a variety of ways, giving students choice, and providing realistic challenges to each student. With the need to compare peers replaced by a developmental perspective, teachers can meet the varying needs of all students.

Educational assessment and evaluation have tended to rely upon externally-imposed, uniform standards. The Intermediate Program emphasizes the need to diversify expectations in order to better meet the needs of more learners. This is not a dilution of standards, but a rejection of the crippling effect of arbitrary standards applied indiscriminately to all students regardless of appropriateness. In many cases, the standards implied by attending to the needs of individual students will be higher than the uniformly-set standards currently in place. The emphasis is on building an educational climate where, as much as possible, students are challenged by high expectations that they have helped define. In addition, to ensure that evaluation procedures are fair for all students, assessment procedures and methods should not place any student or group of students at a disadvantage. Teachers will need to sensitively and thoughtfully adopt and modify procedures as required, to accommodate students' cultural backgrounds, life experiences, and facility with the language of instruction.

◆ Learning experiences should provide for continuous learning

All students can learn, when provided with appropriate learning opportunities. Continuous learning refers to the process of working towards the goals of the Intermediate Program and the Curriculum Intentions in ways that attend to the capabilities and interests of the student. The concept of continuous learning includes the implicit recognition that there exists variation among learners and that students learn in different ways and at different rates. It is important that teachers have flexibility and control within the curriculum.

When students are continuously learning, the idea of "failing" a particular unit, year, or part of a year is no longer a consideration. Repeating large amounts of material and/or activities that have been attempted previously is inappropriate. This neither means that students will always be successful in completing certain tasks nor that they cannot make mistakes. Re-working an assignment or a section of work to improve understanding or quality may be appropriate. Mistakes or failures can provide important information for progress and accomplishment and are a natural part of learning.

Learning from one's mistakes requires a supportive environment within which students feel free to take risks. Students need to take risks in their learning without fear of being penalized for doing so. If a student is having difficulty in a particular area, selection of alternate learning resources, use of different strategies, or an adjustment of time may enable him or her to learn more readily. Students need to feel successful and know that they are working to further their own development—not to keep up or compete with the group.

Continuous learning implies that students are not required to acquire a particular set of skills or cover a predetermined amount of content within a prescribed time limit. Students'

There is a tendency to assume that it is important to attain mastery of a common body of knowledge and skill, according to some common forms of learning, at a common rate, in a common sequence, and to demonstrate this in common forms of performance. The challenge is to provide alternatives to the commonality of means while recognizing the value of common, worthwhile, educationally sound purposes. We must learn to manage diversity as a value and asset, not a problem.

—McLaren, M., 1989, p. 8

development in relation to the Program Goals and Curriculum Intentions is the prime focus.

Students in every year of their Intermediate schooling are working toward the Goals of the Program. Forthcoming Curriculum/Assessment Framework documents will identify the knowledge, skills, and attitudes associated with the various subject areas, so that the coherence of these areas is made apparent.

In this context it is no longer appropriate to refer to the "rate of learning" as amount of content covered over time. Further, a developmental program based on learners' needs and recognizing variation cannot describe, in detailed terms, what students should accomplish by particular ages. In continuous learning, teachers and students set personal expectations appropriate to the students' abilities, and not uniform expectations applied to all students. In such an environment, the potential for raising the standards that students actually meet is increased.

Making comparative reference to expectations for growth and development that are widely held for certain age ranges can help teachers anticipate what might typically be expected. Such comparisons should not prescribe requirements or outcomes to be met. Rather, they enable teachers to focus on a student's current knowledge and understanding and identify the most appropriate areas for further learning and instructional support.

> *The rigidity of the traditional structure forces us to try to fit diverse children into the same mold.*
>
> —Shanker, A., 1990, p. 349

Opportunities that provide for continuous learning might include a variety of challenging activities to accommodate students' interests and differing levels of development. Assessment and evaluation activities should be varied, frequent, ongoing, and used to inform the students and teacher about further learning and future planning needs. All students are not necessarily doing the same thing at the same time nor, even if involved in the same activity, are they all being assessed on the same aspect.

◆ Learning experiences should deal with matters of relevance to learners

In the Intermediate Program, relevance is understood in two ways, neither of which excludes the other. Matters of relevance may refer to those that are personally interesting to students, or to matters that it is in students' best interests to focus on, whether or not they recognize it.

We must create educational experiences which draw students in.
—Nelson, R.C., 1989, p. 638

The first understanding of relevance implies that greater attention should be given to what currently interests students. Using topics that interest students is a means of engaging them in their learning. A task is perceived as relevant when it connects to the learners' concerns. For many students, relevance has to do with "here and now." The "here and now" topics of students' interests can become a point of departure for purposeful work teachers and students do together.

To a considerable extent, education seeks to help students change or look beyond current interests and to see what is in their personal best interests, as well as in the interests of society. Accordingly, the second use of the term relevance refers to what would be desirable or in students' bests interests. Often students do not see how the study of a particular topic is applicable to their current or future lives, nor do they always know what they will find useful and relevant or what is worth knowing. Students may need to be encouraged to explore widely, pursuing new interests and creating a context within which new information and experiences will become meaningful. It is not sufficient that educators do what they believe is good for their students; in view of the number of students who claim not to see any relevance in schooling, it is important that more effort be made to help students see the ways in which schooling is useful or of value to them.

A Legacy For Learners

. . . the curriculum is relevant to the extent that it is useful and meaningful. To be useful, the curriculum must reflect a view of knowledge that connotes more than a set of predetermined facts and conclusions being transmitted untouched and unmodified from one generation to the next. The curriculum must be designed to involve students in critical thinking, if it is to be useful. Moreover, children must be able to see this usefulness for themselves; the curriculum and its goals must engage students in their learning for it to be meaningful to them
— Sullivan, B., et al, 1988, p. 95

Providing learning opportunities that make it possible for students to see how what is learned in one setting can be applied in another can be an effective way of making evident the value or effect of study. Providing a real audience for student work (oneself, the teacher, peers, or community) can be another. Another way to increase students' perception of curricular relevance is to show some connection between the curriculum and students' worlds beyond the classroom. It is frequently possible to use "real" experiences as the basis for demonstrating knowledge embodied in the curriculum. Once students' interests are engaged, they often discover for themselves what makes a particular topic or activity relevant. Their current and future lives, or life chances, are thus expanded as they begin to envision how they will contribute as community members.

◆ Learning experiences should promote student autonomy or self-direction

Autonomous learning is concerned with the individual's ability to have the freedom, opportunity, and capacity to make a choice about what they [sic] will learn, and how they will learn it. It is the development of an individual's capacity to initiate, organize and direct his learning and the way in which he takes on that responsibility for himself. It is part of the pursuit of knowledge, the need to know; the need to find out; the need to make meaning of both the immediate world and the world out there.

—Howe, V. M. & Thomson, T., 1981, p.6

Young people in the Intermediate Program have the opportunity to increase their ability to direct their learning, thereby developing autonomy. Autonomy means having some genuine control over what one is doing. Increasing choices for students gives them control and allows them to create their own challenges and set high personal standards. Choices provide opportunities for students to think for themselves and to compare what they think with the views of their peers, their families, and society-at-large. Through reflection and self-evaluation, students are better able to understand their own learning and make responsible and ethical decisions.

Teachers are encouraged to involve students in discussions about what to learn, how learning can be represented, and how best to assess learning. Students and teachers can work together to articulate purpose, initiate plans, and select activities and resources. Learning activities become more purposeful when students are aware of expectations and evaluation criteria, involved in developing the evaluation criteria, and encouraged to critically reflect upon their learning.

As students accept increasing responsibility for their learning, they are also able to accept responsibility for the standard of work they produce. These standards are evolving, flexible, and internal to the student, as opposed to rigid and external. In this way, students can be enabled to achieve maximum competency relative to their own potential, and not minimum competency relative to a uniform standard. When students share in making important decisions about the processes of their learning and the expectations they are striving to meet, they are provided with opportunities to assume increasing responsibility for their participation and are more likely to take ownership of the learning process.

> *[...]the teacher shifts control to students for large portions of the time, allowing them to make minute by minute decisions regarding pace, sequence, and content of their work, but never completely relinquishing control. Control is indirect, through strategies built into the environment.*
>
> —Kirstead, J., 1985, p. 29

Possession of relevant information, confidence, self-esteem, and intrinsic motivation are key to enabling learners to become more self-directed and autonomous. So too, is the knowledge that autonomy does not mean people are free to act in whatever ways they wish. Although students in the Intermediate Program are often eager to demonstrate their individual and social independence, they remain dependent in their need for the counsel and support provided by parents/guardians and teachers. Young people continue to need direction, parameters within which to make real choices about their learning, and guidelines that can help them act in reasoned, responsible ways. Thus, autonomy does not mean that young people are abandoned to their own devices. Nor does it mean that students assume full responsibility for their learning: a distinction must be made between the goal of "self-directed learning" in one's lifetime, and the more immediate intent of helping students become more "self-directed learners" today.

> *As students become more thoughtful participants in their own education, our goal must be to help them become increasingly able and willing to guide their own learning, fearlessly, for the rest of their lives.*
>
> —Wigginton, E., 1989, p.28

Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting Should Support Learning

For assessment and evaluation to support learning, they must authentically represent the nature of student learning. At the same time, assessment, evaluation, and reporting can contribute to improved learning by helping teachers and students make more informed decisions.

◆ Assessment and evaluation should be authentic

If learning is to be meaningful, if it is to have worth and significance, then assessment and evaluation must be authentic. **Assessment** refers to the process of gathering information about students' experiences and what they have learned. **Evaluation** refers to the process of interpreting that information in order to make judgments and instructional decisions. The quality of the information gained through assessment therefore affects the quality of evaluation.

> *Good evaluation is not an adjunct to good teaching: it is good teaching.*
> —Sadler, D.R., 1983, p. 63

In order to be authentic assessment and evaluation should predominantly reflect or take account of

- the Program Goals
- the learning experiences and learning processes
- the regular conditions of the classroom
- growth in students' products and performances
- some kind of real-life application, purpose, or meaning
- the diversity of students and the ways they learn.

The critical question to ask is "How can assessment and evaluation practices support growth and development, build on students' strengths, and facilitate success?"

Wherever possible, students should see assessment and evaluation activities as part of the learning experience and not as intrusive or threatening. Using a variety of assessment methods allows educators to recognize the diversity of learners and learning and to build more comprehensive pictures of students' interests, needs, abilities, and achievements. Using a variety of assessment methods and taking account of a student's efforts to represent his or her learning a number of times and in a number of contexts also allows teachers to make more accurate appraisals of the learner's progress.

Skillful questioning integrates instruction and assessment; the questions we ask prompt students' thinking and learning; the answers give us insights into their thinking and learning.
—Jeroski, S., 1990

Generally speaking, assessment and evaluation should focus on demonstrated performance related to matters that have value and relevance in students' lives rather than to contrived classroom activities. What is assessed and how learning is assessed, evaluated, and reported indicates to students and parents/guardians what is deemed important. Authentic assessment and evaluation will consider students' growing competence and development in all goal areas, not simply those most easily assessed. This means that the teacher looks beyond performances and products and attempts to understand and describe the underlying reasoning, thinking, and skills that are exhibited.

Since changes in growth and learning are occurring all the time, assessment and evaluation should be conducted on a regular, frequent basis and over a significant period of time. In this way, a more realistic picture of growth and development is obtained, and students can gain pride and satisfaction through seeing their accomplishments and development over time.

◆ Assessment, evaluation, and reporting should facilitate informed decision making

In the Intermediate Program, assessment, evaluation, and reporting are processes that assist teachers and students in making informed decisions about learning. Identifying and describing development over time helps students and teachers recognize patterns and changes. As they become aware of students' strengths and develop strategies that can help students improve their learning, students and teachers together are more able to set challenging, yet realistic goals, and make decisions about learning experiences. Being successful and achieving their goals can enhance students' self-esteem and encourage them to persevere in their learning.

By involving students in evaluating their own actions as learners, they will ultimately develop a clearer conception of themselves as learners.

—Riecken, T., 1989, p. 64

Learning experiences become more meaningful when responsibility for assessment, evaluation, and reporting is shared with students. Students who engage in reflection and self-evaluation are provided with opportunities to learn more about themselves—what their strengths are, how they learn best, and how to use this information to make decisions about their learning. Opportunities to establish evaluative criteria and to analyze and critique the work of others teaches learners how to recognize high-quality performances or products. Students who learn how to evaluate their personal growth and development assume greater responsibility for their learning.

Appropriate assessment, evaluation, and reporting practices focus on what is of most value and importance. They enable teachers to convey meaningful information to students and parents/guardians about growth and development with respect to the Program Goals and the Curriculum Intentions. Because assessment and evaluation procedures involve making subjective judgments however, information must be interpreted cautiously. Awareness of the subjectivity of assessment and evaluation has particular significance when describing and reporting student learning. Caring and trusting relationships make it possible for all partners, including parents/guardians, to collaborate in processes that can result in informed educational decision making.

As students move through the Intermediate years, assessment and evaluation practices should help them to develop clearer conceptions of themselves as learners and enable them to pursue learning in increasingly challenging and self-motivated ways. As they enter the Graduation Program, students will, with adult guidance, be able to make appropriate choices and decisions about future learning.

[illegible]

The Intermediate Program is a Program for All Learners

What is important is what is different, not what is the same.
[...]
How can we make conscious, deliberate use of differences in social class, gender, age, ability, race, and interest as resources for learning?
—Barth, R., 1990, p. 515, 514

All students must be included as full and welcome participants in the Intermediate Program. This means system-wide adoption of practices that

- promote gender equity
- promote positive multicultural and race relations
- respond to the particular requirements of First Nations learners
- meet the needs of learners for whom English is a second language
- serve young people with special needs.

In this section, some of the social and cultural issues relevant to these students' learning experiences are outlined. They are of concern for the education of all students in a democratic society wherein diversity is valued and wherein people are dedicated to the preservation of individual human rights.

◆ Gender Equity

Changes in roles and societal expectations for men and women, boys and girls are significant to Intermediate learners who are shaping a sense of identity. Currently, stereotypical perceptions and sexist attitudes prevalent throughout society may limit students' perceptions of individual potential. Girls, for example, may learn to think of science or mathematics as "unfeminine," while boys may learn to think of dance, creative writing, or home economics as "unmasculine." In the Intermediate Program, gender equity is concerned with helping young people think about these questions in relation to their own lives. The Intermediate Program is intended to help both females and males develop confidence in their abilities.

Presently, societal inequities between the sexes offer a limited viewpoint to young people in the midst of transition from childhood to adult life. Young people who are making decisions that shape their futures should have the opportunity to learn from resources that incorporate the experiences of both females and males. Broadening the scope for students also requires that a range of career possibilities and options be explored by both boys and girls. In this way, students may begin to see that societal expectations for men and women are always capable of changing and that their own participation in those changes is an ongoing subject for reflection.

Experiences that lead to the development of a positive self-esteem enable young people to make choices from within—from ability and desire—rather than from external pressures and stereotypes. As well, opportunities and learning experiences that enhance students' awareness of issues such as stereotyping, violence against women, or the roles of men and women in the world of work and within the family should reinforce the principle of gender equity. Learning experiences should enable students to

- recognize gender bias
- form attitudes that are free of such bias
- develop skills for dealing with bias when they encounter it.

Intermediate Program Goals address all aspects of human growth in order to help both female and male learners develop qualities leading to active participation and cooperative, caring relationships. Learning experiences that help students to think critically, respect and care for their bodies, act with awareness of human rights, explore traditional and non-traditional career options, and develop self-esteem make meaningful contributions to the promotion of gender equity.

The Intermediate Program further advances gender equity by promoting school cultures wherein all school personnel model non-sexist, collaborative relationships and wherein gender-inclusive language is valued and used. Language both indicates and shapes thinking. Choosing to speak of "humanity" instead of "mankind," for example, includes rather than excludes women. Through their language and actions, adults indicate their support for gender equity. All students, female or male, within a school culture that is sensitive to gender issues may be challenged to achieve their individual best, thereby laying the foundation for a fair and productive future.

◆ Multicultural and Race Relations

In a healthy society, cultural diversity and individual differences are valued. Freedom from discrimination and equality of opportunity, regardless of race or cultural background, are embedded within democratic educational systems. The Intermediate Program seeks to promote understanding and respect among different cultural groups and races and to eliminate discrimination and racism.

Awareness of and respect for cultural differences is essential if all learners are to develop their individual potential and contribute to a healthy society. Indeed, multicultural and race relations education is crucial to self-esteem of learners who are not members of the dominant culture. When cultural histories, languages, traditions, values, and lifestyles are acknowledged and incorporated into school experiences, students' pride in their heritage is fostered. Schooling becomes more relevant, and learning is enhanced. Conversely, practices that ignore the importance of cultural background inhibit the ability of some students to learn. For example, assessment strategies that are insensitive to linguistic background can lead to inappropriate judgments concerning the learning of linguistic minority students.

Multiculturalism and race relations are not concerns for ethnic minorities only, but for all members of Canadian society who must live with and come to understand cultural groups different from their own. Cultural diversity within the student population provides a rich source of information for all in the school. Because of their level of social, and emotional, physical, and intellectual development, Intermediate learners are well situated to explore cross-cultural similarities and differences and to consider issues of discrimination. Adolescent students can benefit from opportunities to compare their ideas and values with those of their peers. Prevalent concerns about what is "normal" can be somewhat dissipated if students begin to understand each other's experiences. The use of cooperative learning groups that include students from different cultures and races is one means of promoting such understanding. Within such groups or in other configurations, Intermediate learners can develop their abilities to think critically, to investigate problems, and to make and justify decisions. Exploring beyond the comfortable aspects of other cultures—food and festivals—can lead to close examination of more controversial dimensions of cultures, which can lead to changes in attitudes. Learning to identify prejudice, bias, and stereotyping, including one's own, is an important component of critical thinking. As well, the development of moral reasoning helps to combat racist attitudes and discriminatory practices.

At the same time as Intermediate learners are engaged in thinking about issues of social responsibility and ethical behaviour, they are also participating more directly in society. During adolescence, many young people are symbolically welcomed into full membership within their ethno-cultural communities. Communication between the school and each of these communities is an important indication that cultural diversity is valued. As well, students benefit from positive relationships that may result from community involvement in schooling experiences.

Young people (as well as adults) are often intolerant of those who are different. Belonging to one group can sometimes lead students to exclude or harass members of another group. Strategies that help students to identify overt and subtle, informal and institutional dimensions of racism are not enough. Students also need to be empowered to resist racism when they encounter it. Cultural and racial harassment manifests itself in a variety of ways, including name-calling, jokes, slurs, graffiti, insults, intimidation, and physical abuse. Such behaviour is inappropriate in schools, regardless of who the perpetrators might be. Besides engaging students in critical thinking and moral reasoning, learning experiences should also foster the development of assertiveness and communication skills. These skills should enable students to act upon their concern about racial harassment or behaviour.

In summary, the Intermediate Program facilitates the achievement of multicultural and race relations goals by

- fostering the development of educated citizens who will work toward the creation of a culturally diverse society based upon democratic and ethical principles
- valuing the cultural experiences of all learners
- promoting cooperation, critical thinking, and community involvement.

◆ Learners for whom English is a Second Language

In some school districts, learners for whom English is a second language form a significant proportion of the student population. The challenges of enabling these learners to develop their individual potential deserve special consideration.

Students who are learning English as a second language come from a variety of backgrounds and experiences. They may be Canadian-born, immigrant, or refugee children. Some may have had little or no schooling, while others may have experienced many years of education in their first language. As well as their educational backgrounds, the life experiences of ESL learners are diverse and may have significant impact upon the ease with which they learn. Refugee students who have been through severe trauma and dislocation may suffer from social and psychological disorders that inhibit learning. Many ESL learners, on the other hand, have little difficulty adjusting to different values, a new language, and changed educational practices.

The Intermediate Program, by attending to individual learning differences and focusing on development in several goal areas, helps to create a supportive environment for ESL learners. The wealth of personal experiences and skills that these young people bring to schooling forms a basis for future learning. By viewing these experiences as a valuable educational resource, educators may enrich the learning experiences of all students and enhance the confidence and self-concept of ESL learners.

Language is learned through meaningful experiences in social contexts. Interaction between ESL and English-speaking learners can facilitate language development for all students. By promoting interaction and communication between ESL learners and their English-speaking peers, the Intermediate Program suggests the provision of learning opportunities that can enable all students to

- value first languages
- collaborate and share experiences
- develop respect for individual differences
- value cultural diversity.

While ESL students may acquire adequate conversational English skills within a year or two, developing a level of academic language proficiency similar to that of their peers may require from four to eight years. The intellectual development of ESL learners should not be restricted by a limited proficiency in English, however. Learners' level of language development should be taken into account when designing learning opportunities that will help develop knowledge, skills, and attitudes in non-linguistic areas.

Assessment and evaluation practices, as well, should enable rather than limit development of the ESL learner's individual potential and ability to contribute to society. Students who have understanding of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are being assessed and evaluated may lack the means to demonstrate their understanding. Use should be made of assessment and evaluation procedures that do not disadvantage these students. Consideration also needs to be given to the methods used to report to parents/guardians of ESL students. Organizing student-led conferences and using translation and interpretation services for reporting are ways to enhance communication between the school and the home.

Education of ESL learners within the Intermediate Program is a complex issue, dependent upon factors of communicative and academic language proficiency, cultural acquisition, and adaptation to new environments. Adding to the complexity is the fact that the ESL student population is a microcosm of the general student population. There are ESL students who are mentally or physically challenged, or who are gifted and talented. The Intermediate Program, with its emphasis on the learner, is designed to enable these students and all learners to develop their potential as educated citizens in Canadian society.

◆ First Nations Learners

All young people come to school with knowledge and points of view that reflect their personal, social, and cultural backgrounds. The relationship between their experiences in school and the opportunities that they have had within their families and cultures affects how and what they learn. In the Intermediate Program, learning experiences are intended to present young people from First Nations cultures with appropriate and relevant means of developing their individual potential. By respecting the values and beliefs inherent in First Nations cultures and by reflecting these cultural traditions within learning experiences, the Intermediate Program helps First Nations learners to build upon their prior understandings and develop and support their sense of cultural identity. Introducing and maintaining the rich cultural and linguistic traditions of First Nations learners within the school and classroom environments contributes to the development of the cultural identity of First Nations peoples as well as to the education and understanding of all.

First Nations learners face challenges that are unique to their situation as indigenous peoples whose traditions have not always been respected by the dominant society. Many First Nations languages are endangered, and many First Nations learners have been disconnected from their heritage. There is nowhere else in the world First Nations learners can go to learn their languages; there are no other peoples from whom to learn their heritage. Within the homeland of First Nations peoples, the survival of their distinctive cultures and languages must be ensured.

The Intermediate Program is intended to assist First Nations learners to retain and strengthen their linguistic and cultural heritage by

- promoting active involvement of First Nations peoples in developing appropriate local programs
- acknowledging accredited First Nations language programs as an alternative to French as a language requirement

- representing First Nations cultures in resources and learning experiences for all students in the Intermediate Program.

First Nations learners, like other learners, must be enabled to contribute to and participate in a healthy society and prosperous economy. Developing a positive and realistic sense of self is important to this purpose. School environments that reflect First Nations role models encourage all young people to appreciate aboriginal peoples' contributions to education and society. As well, First Nations learners are encouraged by such practices to identify themselves as potential leaders and to set personal, educational, and career goals. Adults can play significant roles in the development of self-esteem of First Nations learners. School staff, which may include First Nations educators, can work with elders, First Nations language instructors, home-school coordinators, and members of First Nations organizations and businesses to support students' learning. This provides a supportive network for the education of First Nations learners and opportunities for all students to experience First Nations people as members of the educational community.

The experiences of First Nations learners throughout their Intermediate years should help them gain the confidence and competence that is the foundation for lifelong learning. Students will have opportunities to learn in a variety of ways and to represent their learning through a variety of forms. As well, assessment practices that are free of cultural and linguistic bias, that recognize individual diversity, and that provide opportunities for students to engage in self-evaluation should enable First Nations learners to make informed decisions about their educational futures. In these ways, the Intermediate Program is expected to enhance the educational opportunities of First Nations learners.

◆ **Learners with Special Needs**

Some young people in the Intermediate Program have disabilities and/or are gifted in ways that require specific attention if these learners are to develop their individual potential. Students with special needs include

- those who have been identified as gifted
- those with visual, hearing, physical, or chronic health impairment
- those with intellectual disabilities
- those with severe emotional and social disabilities.

As a group, students with special needs display a wide range of strengths, interests, and abilities. While changes to conditions or services required for their learning must be determined individually and recorded in Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs), this does not imply that the learning experiences of students with special needs should be isolated from those of other students. Young people with special needs are typically more like than unlike other students and should be integrated into classrooms within their local schools, wherever possible. This social integration does not preclude appropriate use of resource rooms or of self-contained or specialized settings. Flexible grouping arrangements may permit learners to move into situations in which they are at times learning with peers whose intellectual, social, physical, or emotional development is similar to their own. Young people with physical disabilities, for example, may benefit from contact with other students who share a similar condition. Likewise, students who are intellectually gifted benefit from opportunities to learn with others of similar interests, abilities, or talents.

At other times, learners with special needs are involved in activities that bring them together with individuals whose experiences are unlike their own. These opportunities can expand awareness and understanding and enhance self-esteem. For example, opportunities for students with disabilities to interact with peers who do not share these disabilities can be enriching experiences for both groups of learners.

> 1. (2) Unless the educational needs of a handicapped student indicate that the student's educational program should be provided otherwise, a board shall provide that student with an educational program in classrooms where that student is integrated with other students who do not have handicaps.
>
> —Ministerial Order 150/89

Incorporating students with special needs into classroom settings means that teachers will require support. For example, learning assistance teachers and counsellors can provide direct instructional and consultative services. Other allied professionals are often needed to identify students with special needs at an early age and to provide support.

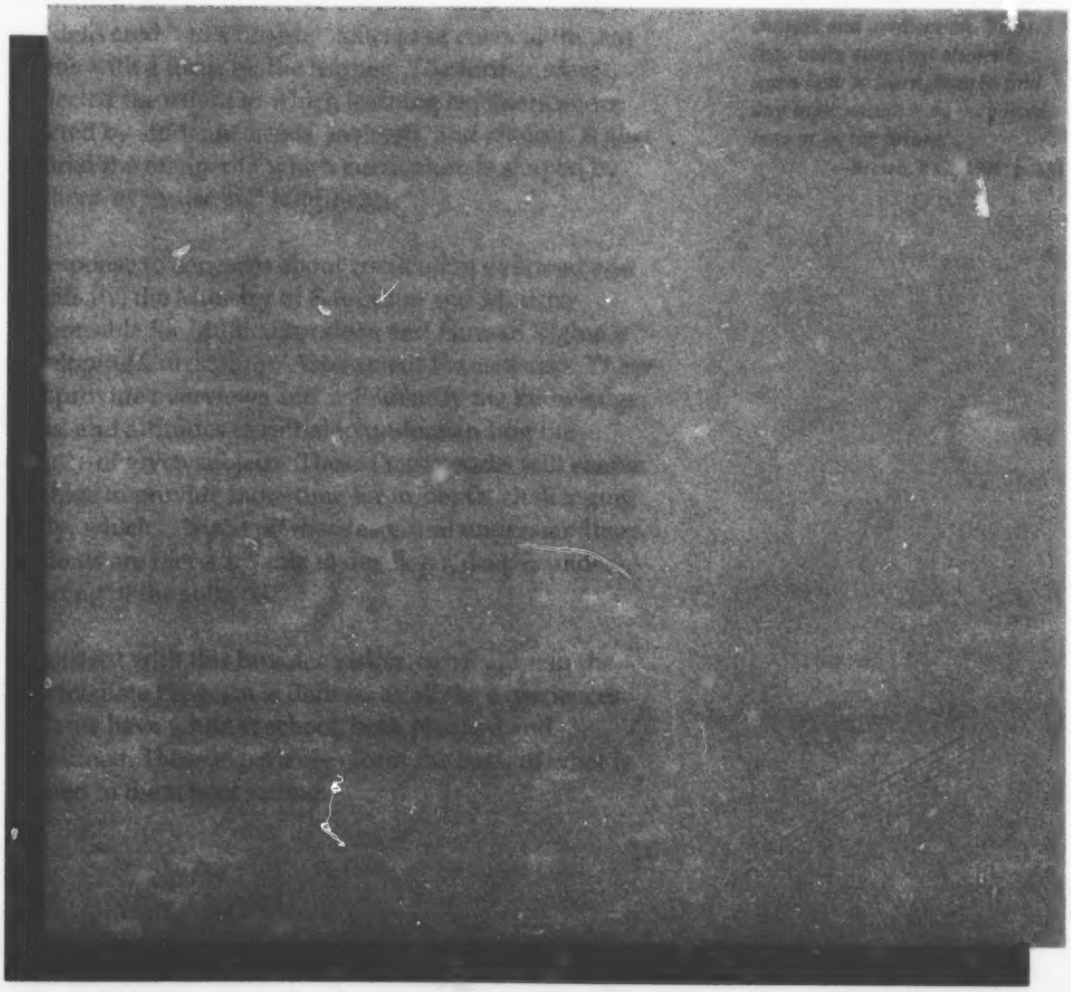
For all students, assessment is carried out on an ongoing basis by the classroom teacher in the course of instruction. For students whose learning needs seem to differ significantly from those of other students, classroom teachers collaborate with other professionals, such as the learning assistance teacher, to conduct more intensive and individual assessments. This type of individual assessment may require use of criterion-referenced and norm-referenced instruments. For some students with special needs, assessments of an individual diagnostic nature are carried out by professionals appropriately trained in the use of specialized criterion-referenced and norm-referenced measures such as psycho-educational assessment, or hearing and vision tests. The purpose of this type of assessment is to assist school-based staff to plan IEPs.

In response to the special needs of these students, educators design IEPs that include provision for modifications to learning goals, processes, and environments. Developing these plans calls for consultation and collaboration among classroom teachers, learning assistance teachers, teachers of the gifted, speech and language pathologists, parents/guardians, counsellors, child care workers, and other specialists. To assist teachers in creating suitable learning environments for students with special needs, these educators consider the emotional, physical, social and intellectual development of each learner, and suggest additional materials, equipment, and service as required. Where appropriate, students and their parents/guardians should also be involved in discussing and creating IEPs. To be useful documents, IEPs should include practical strategies and be free of jargon.

In addition to receiving support from classroom teachers and specialists, students with special needs may obtain support from paraprofessionals. While teachers are responsible for planning learning experiences for all students in their classrooms, paraprofessionals may support the learning of students with special needs by providing personal care if required and, under the direction of a teacher, assisting with instruction or collecting data for classroom assessment.

The Intermediate Program contributes to developing the individual potential of students with special needs in all program goal areas by respecting all young people as unique individuals and supporting the creation of supportive environments for students with special needs.

CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT IN THE INTERMEDIATE PROGRAM



The Nature of Curriculum

> *Since no human being can learn all the facts there are to know, teachers concentrate on enabling students to learn fewer things in greater depth, with greater connectedness. They make the question, not the fact, the fundamental unit of the curriculum; they emphasize context and application. Then they make sure that students learn how to learn, how to find any information they may need, now or in the future.*
>
> —Brown, R.G., 1991, p. 238

Curriculum has often been interpreted to mean a finely specified, sequentially prescribed body of topics and learning outcomes that all students must address. Assessment methods, evaluation practices, and approaches to selecting resources have all reinforced such an interpretation. An important shift expressed by the Intermediate Program is a move away from viewing curriculum as "ground to be covered," or something to be "delivered," to a broader concept of curriculum that begins with a focus on the learner. The former view neglected the extent to which learning experiences are affected by students' needs, interests, and choices. It also ignored the manner in which curriculum is shaped by teachers' expertise and judgments.

In response to concerns about curriculum overload and specificity, the Ministry of Education and Ministry Responsible for Multiculturalism and Human Rights is developing Curriculum/Assessment Frameworks. These will provide overviews and will identify the knowledge, skills, and attitudes essential to understanding the essence of given subjects. These Frameworks will enable teachers to provide more time for in-depth, challenging study, which is based on these essential understandings. Students are therefore able to develop a deeper understanding of the subjects.

Consistent with this broader vision, curriculum in the Intermediate Program is defined as all the experiences students have while at school, both planned and unplanned. These experiences form the basis of what is learned in the school setting.

Articulating Curriculum

Following a distinction identified in *A Legacy for Learners: The Report of the Royal Commission on Education, 1988,* Chapter 5, it is useful to consider three aspects of curriculum: the intended curriculum, the implemented or experienced curriculum, and the attained curriculum. These aspects of curriculum are closely interrelated and are associated with the cyclical pattern of curriculum decision making, implementation, and evaluation.

- **Intended curriculum** refers to the objectives that curriculum planners, teachers, and the community intend to have students pursue as well as the learning opportunities they plan to have students experience. The intended curriculum is based on all goals of the Intermediate Program, the Curriculum/Assessment Frameworks, and teachers' own expectations. An important ingredient of the intended curriculum is teachers' understanding of their students' needs and stages of development.

- The **experienced curriculum** exists within the context of the classroom and other learning environments. In the words of Sullivan (1988) it is the curriculum "brought to life"—actually experienced by the learner. It emerges from the planned and spontaneous interactions within the classroom and the school and is a function of students' active participation in decisions regarding their learning. Because of students' individual interests, needs, attitudes, and abilities, the experienced curriculum differs for each student.

- The **attained curriculum** refers to the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that students actually acquire as a result of the intended and experienced curriculum. While assessment and evaluation of these outcomes should be guided by the intended curriculum, much valuable learning may go beyond these intentions and may not even be related to them. This unplanned learning may be as important to learner development as the learning foreseen by the intended curriculum.

◆ Curriculum/Assessment Frameworks

Teachers (and students) will be assisted in making the kinds of informed curricular decisions implied by this expanded view of curriculum within the Intermediate Program by a variety of support materials including additional Ministry-developed documents. One set of documents, referred to as Curriculum/Assessment Frameworks, will outline expectations for each subject. These Frameworks will contain the following:

- **Overview** — statements of the nature of the subject, its contribution to the growth of the learner, and its contribution to the Goals and Principles of the Intermediate Program.
- **Curriculum Intentions** — an outline of the broad foundation of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are related to the subject and that all students should have the opportunity to experience and/or develop.

Unlike traditional curriculum guides that specify sets of details or specific facts to be acquired by all learners, Frameworks outline broad understandings to be sought. From these outlines, teachers and students can plan specific learning activities that tap into students' interests, abilities, and backgrounds.

Further, Curriculum/Assessment Framework documents will be designed to give teachers and students flexibility in sequencing learning opportunities, so that learners' developmental needs can be taken into account. In support of this, the practice of organizing learning resources by grade (e.g., Grade 6) will be discontinued.

Various other support materials will be developed to complement *The Intermediate Program: Foundations* and the Curriculum/Assessment Framework documents. Until such materials are available, teachers are encouraged to use present curriculum guides and resource books when planning experiences for learners. Already, many of the more recently published curriculum guides have moved in the directions suggested in this document. For example, the *Language Arts/English Curriculum Guide, Primary to Graduation* (revised 1990) does not prescribe scope or sequence. Growth and development are described in four phases: primary, early intermediate, late intermediate, and graduation. Experiences for each phase are described as "orientation, emphasis, or maintenance" stage for most students. This allows teachers considerable flexibility to plan in light of the individual needs of their own students.

It is important for the coherence of students' learning that there be a continuity and building of understanding and skills within a given year and from year-to-year. Development of the Curriculum/Assessment Frameworks represents a first step toward coordination of learning opportunities that can facilitate continuous growth and eliminate undesirable repetition.

In addition, districts and schools may devote up to 20% of instructional time to working on locally developed or adopted programs that are suited to the needs of students in the local community, provided these programs are compatible with the Intermediate Program Goals and Principles. (The curriculum identified in the Curriculum/Assessment Framework documents forms the basis of at least 80% of instructional time, although it may occupy up to 100% of instructional time.) Programs in heritage or other languages, "Stay in School" initiatives, and independent studies are examples of local programming already in place in some school districts.

◆ Ensuring a Balanced Curriculum

Samples of the *(DRAFT) Curriculum/Assessment Frameworks*, organized by subject for all years of schooling, are forthcoming. These Primary to Graduation Frameworks have (or will be) developed by subject, and grouped by strands similar to those recommended by the Royal Commission:

Fine Arts:	Dance, Drama/Theatre, Music, and Visual Arts
Practical Arts:	Business Education, Home Economics, Physical Education, and Technology Education
Humanities:	Language Arts/English, French as a Second Language (and/or other languages), Learning for Living, and Social Studies
Sciences:	Mathematics and Science.

Strands provide a way of thinking about curriculum according to broad categories of human experience and are intended to promote a broadly based, balanced education. This commitment is consistent with the Commission's emphasis on the value of a liberal education in preparing our students to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century. The Intermediate Program draws on the *Report of the Royal Commission on Education* in this respect and in addressing statements such as the following:

> Earlier, we drew attention to the fragmented nature of the Intended Curriculum, to situations which sometimes result in a less than coherent program from Grades 1 through 12, and to a curriculum ill-suited to the physical, social, and emotional needs of many adolescents. This is a system-level problem, but the solution is to be found at the level of individuals in schools. In other words, the solution requires a change in the structuring of the curriculum and in the attitudes of those who activate that curriculum. (p. 94)

Curriculum Intentions

(refer to forthcoming Curriculum/Assessment Frameworks—February/March, 1992)

DRAFT ONLY

Language Arts English

Aim

The aim of Language Arts English is to enable each learner to experience literature and to use language with satisfaction and confidence, striving for fluency, precision, clarity, and independence.

Curriculum Intentions

1. The learner will have opportunities to develop the knowledge, skills, processes, and attitudes needed to communicate effectively.
2. The learner will have opportunities to develop knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of language.
3. The learner will have opportunities to develop knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of literature, from Canada and the rest of the world in English or English translation).
4. The learner will have opportunities to develop thinking and learning in the context of language, literature, and media.

Mathematics

Aim

The aim of mathematics education is to enable the learner to gain mathematical power.

Mathematical power is an individual's ability to explore, conjecture, and reason logically, and to use a variety of mathematical methods to solve a wide variety of problems. Acquiring mathematical power involves the development of personal self-confidence. This idea of mathematical power is based on the recognition that mathematics is more than a collection of skills and concepts to be mastered. Mathematics must be understood to include investigating and reasoning, communicating, seeing relationships, and putting things into perspective.

Curriculum Intentions

1. The learner will have opportunities to develop mathematical power by learning to value mathematics.
2. The learner will have opportunities to develop mathematical power by gaining confidence in personal mathematical ability.
3. The learner will have opportunities to develop mathematical power by becoming a mathematical problem solver.
4. The learner will have opportunities to develop mathematical power by making mathematical connections.
5. The learner will have opportunities to develop mathematical power by learning to communicate mathematically.
6. The learner will have opportunities to develop mathematical power by learning to reason mathematically.
7. The learner will have opportunities to develop mathematical power by understanding mathematical concepts and acquiring mathematical skills.

Learning for Living

Aim

The aim of Learning for Living is to empower learners to value themselves as unique persons of worth who care for self and others, make responsible decisions, and strive for a healthy, balanced life.

Curriculum Intentions

1. The learner will have opportunities to develop as a unique, worthwhile, caring individual, capable of achieving personal growth and becoming responsible for his or her own behaviour and decisions.
2. The learner will have opportunities to understand the nature of human relationships and to grow in his or her ability to behave towards others in a responsible, caring way.
3. The learner will have opportunities to understand family and societal expectations and his or her rights and responsibilities as an individual who is independent and interdependent with others in a diverse society.
4. The learner will have opportunities to understand and appreciate lifelong human development and to practice healthy lifestyles.

Science

Aim

The aim of science education is to enable all learners to experience science and develop scientific literacy.

The scientifically literate individual

- is familiar with the natural world and recognizes its diversity and unity
- has a positive attitude toward science
- can communicate an understanding of scientific concepts and principles
- uses scientific knowledge and ways of thinking to investigate the natural world, to solve problems, and to make decisions
- recognizes that science is a creative human endeavour
- understands that science, technology and society are interdependent.

Curriculum Intentions

1. The learner will experience opportunities to develop and use the skills and processes of science that facilitate exploration and investigation.
2. The learner will experience opportunities to develop attitudes and dispositions that reflect the nature of scientific inquiry.
3. The learner will experience opportunities to understand and apply a variety of concepts and principles of science.
4. The learner will experience opportunities to understand science as a creative human endeavour.
5. The learner will experience opportunities to explore the connections among science, technology, and society.

NB: Curriculum Intentions for French as a Second Language, Social Studies, Dance, Drama/Theatre, Music, and Visual Arts are under development.

Business Education

Aim

The aim of Business Education is to enable learners to acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to understand and apply business and economic concepts in both their personal and business lives.

Curriculum Intentions

1. The learner will have opportunities to develop problem-solving skills using appropriate technology in a business context.
2. The learner will have opportunities to develop entrepreneurial attitudes.
3. The learner will have opportunities to explore the widest possible array of business-related career paths.
4. The learner will have opportunities to develop an understanding and appreciation of the effects of technological change on business and society.
5. The learner will have opportunities to understand and apply ergonomics, health, and safety practices in a variety of home and business situations.
6. The learner will have opportunities to develop an understanding and appreciation of the cultural influences on business practices at the local and international levels.
7. The learner will have opportunities to understand and apply basic economic principles as producers and consumers.
8. The learner will have opportunities to develop and apply appropriate communication skills in a variety of business and personal contexts.

DRAFT ONLY

Home Economics

Aim

The aim of Home Economics education is to enable the learner to respond with responsibility to the challenges of everyday life in order to further the well-being of individuals, families, and the global society.

Curriculum Intentions

1. The learner will have opportunities to nurture human growth and development.
2. The learner will have opportunities to participate in activities that reflect both the work of families and the demands of careers/occupations.
3. The learner will have opportunities to understand cultures and their effects on individuals, families, and society.
4. The learner will have opportunities to address needs and wants of individuals and families.
5. The learner will have opportunities to develop a lifestyle that contributes to his or her own well-being, as well as that of families and society.
6. The learner will have opportunities to develop as a globally responsible consumer, able to manage individual and family resources.
7. The learner will have opportunities to enhance interpersonal relationships within the context of families and society.
8. The learner will have opportunities to value and practise creative expression for the well-being of individuals, families, and society.

Technology Education

Aim

The aim of Technology Education is to enable all students to become confident and responsible in solving technological problems, striving for product excellence, social consciousness, and creative lifelong learning.

Curriculum Intentions

1. The learner will have opportunities to develop the ability to solve technological problems.
2. The learner will have opportunities to develop the ability to make things and explore technology.
3. The learner will have opportunities to develop lifelong learning patterns to help him or her function effectively in a changing technological environment.
4. The learner will have opportunities to acquire skills and attitudes to enable him or her to work with technology both independently and as a cooperative member of a group.
5. The learner will have opportunities to develop an ability to assess and a commitment to respond ethically to the impacts and consequences of technology.
6. The learner will have opportunities to develop appropriate attitudes and practices with respect to safe work and personal health.
7. The learner will have opportunities to gain competence in working with tools, materials, and processes to produce high-quality work.
8. The learner will have opportunities to develop language and visual communications skills to investigate, explain, and illustrate aspects of technology.
9. The learner will have opportunities to apply and integrate skills, knowledge, and resources across disciplines and technological activities.
10. The learner will have opportunities to explore and pursue technological careers and associated lifestyles.
11. The learner will have opportunities to become a discerning user of materials, products, and technical services.

Physical Education

Aim

The aim of Physical Education is to enable all learners to enhance their quality of life through active living.

Curriculum Intentions

1. The learner will have opportunities to develop efficient and effective movement skills.
2. The learner will have opportunities to develop a functional level of activity-specific motor skills, in a wide variety of movement categories.
3. The learner will have opportunities to develop positive personal attributes and interpersonal relationships.
4. The learner will have opportunities to develop a positive attitude toward active living in the pursuit of lifelong health and well-being.
5. The learner will have opportunities to develop knowledge and understanding supporting active living.
6. The learner will have opportunities to develop intellectual skills through physical activity.
7. The learner will have opportunities to develop/maintain a functional level of physical fitness.
8. The learner will have opportunities to explore and pursue career and occupational opportunities related to physical education.

Curriculum Intentions for some subjects—as currently available, and as they may appear in the forthcoming *(DRAFT) Curriculum/Assessment Frameworks*—are shown on the previous pages. **It is essential that all Curriculum Intentions be addressed, for each student, in all* years of the Intermediate Program**. However, it is understood that in the later years of the Intermediate Program students who wish to focus on some areas more than on others will be supported in their efforts to do so.

The Curriculum Intentions are meant to provide focus and to be a guide for planning learning opportunities. Educators, students, parents, and the general public all need to know what it is we are are collectively trying to achieve. The Intentions are also meant to enable: their purpose is to provide definition and clear direction, without being prescriptive and restricting. The responsibility for organizing learning opportunities and how the Curriculum Intentions are addressed lies with schools and districts.

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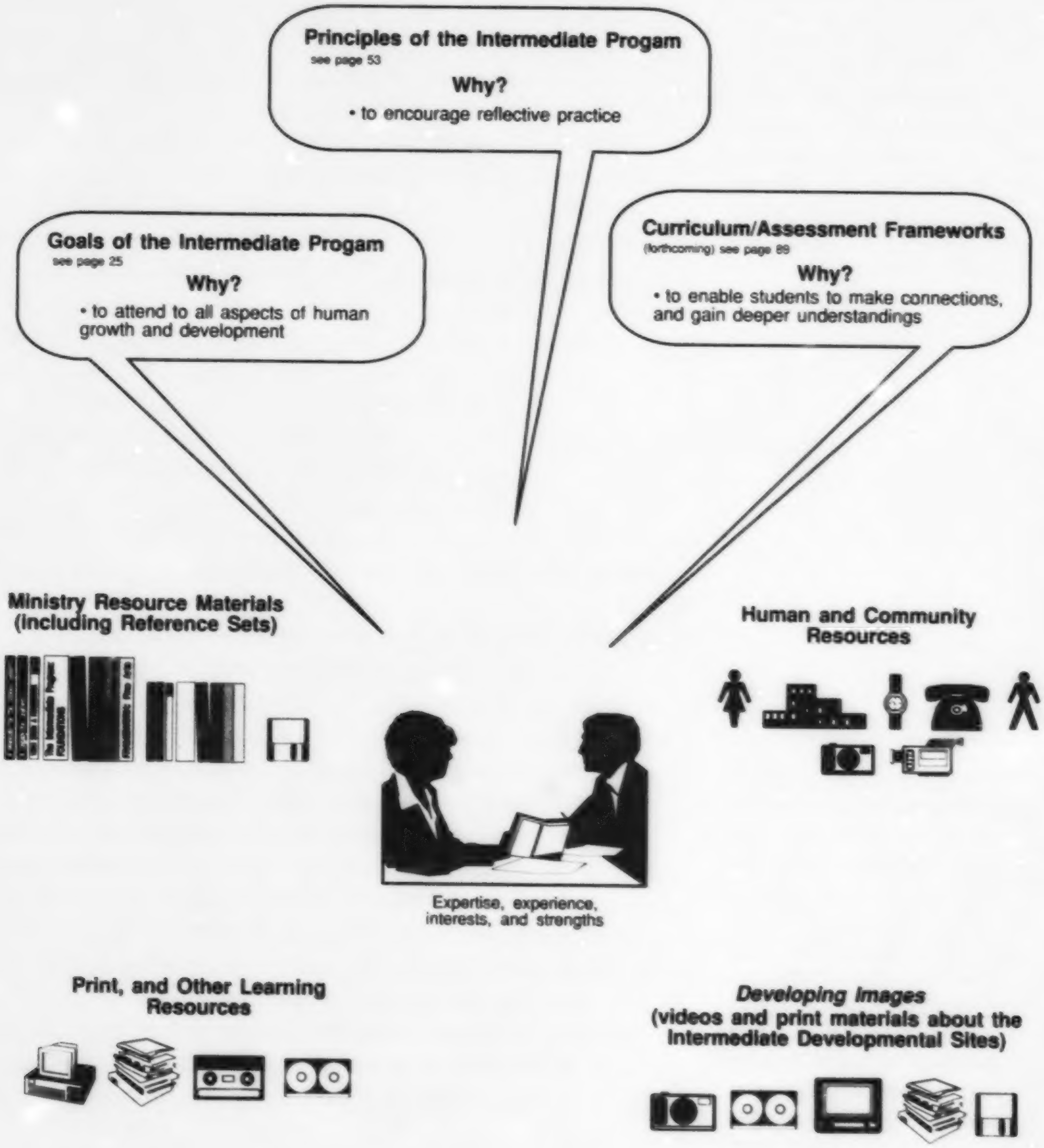
* *The exception to this is French as a Second Language, which is not required in the first year of the Intermediate Program, and which is optional for the sixth and seventh years. A school board may approve an alternative to French where linguistic, ethnic, or cultural factors warrant. A school board may exempt students with special needs or other students (E.S.L.) from the study of a second language.*

Considerations for Educational Decision Making in the Intermediate Program



Principles of the Intermediate Progam
see page 53

Why?

- to encourage reflective practice

Goals of the Intermediate Progam
see page 25

Why?

- to attend to all aspects of human growth and development

Curriculum/Assessment Frameworks
(forthcoming) see page 89

Why?

- to enable students to make connections, and gain deeper understandings

Ministry Resource Materials (including Reference Sets)

Human and Community Resources

Expertise, experience, interests, and strengths

Print, and Other Learning Resources

Developing Images
(videos and print materials about the Intermediate Developmental Sites)

Planning Learning Opportunities

Curricular planning necessitates making professional judgments—prior, during and after any particular learning experience. Despite clearly outlined Frameworks and carefully prepared resources, curriculum as it is experienced cannot be predetermined. What is learned, and how it is learned will differ from student to student. Distinct curriculum experiences and attainments occur through the dynamic interplay of individuals—each with differing interests, needs, abilities, backgrounds, and ways of learning—working together in interaction with each other and the learning resources. Judgment and decisions about curriculum, assessment, and evaluation issues require consideration of

- the Program Goals and Principles
- the most appropriate content or topics for focus
- the materials, groupings, and strategies best suited to the range of student interests, needs, abilities, backgrounds, and ways of learning
- what will maximize the learning opportunities for all students
- appropriate ways to assess and evaluate learning in order to set new intentions or design further learning experiences.

Teachers' participation in dialogue about their classroom practices is a critical part of their process of searching for meaning in their teaching. Action research groups establish a forum where teachers can talk candidly and openly about their classrooms and thus themselves.

—Rogers, D.L., Noblit, G. W. and Ferrell, P., 1990, p. 182

In the early years of the Intermediate Program, responsibility for curricular decision making lies primarily with teachers. As learners grow in their capacity to make responsible choices, they should share increasingly in decisions regarding all aspects of curriculum. Working within the parameters of the Goals and Principles of the Intermediate Program, teachers and students together will assess and evaluate learning, set new intentions, and design experiences that are both relevant and challenging. Guiding this emergent capacity for student self-directed learning is an important part of every teacher's role.

[When curriculum is negotiated the] eventual learning activities may thus be the outcome of interplay between the teacher's strategic views of long-term goals and the pupils' sense of their immediate learning needs and concerns. The purpose of negotiation is to identify topics and activities which at once engage the learner's commitment and offer routes to goals that the teacher recognizes as important.

—Barnes, D., 1989, p.6

◆ Fostering Personal Integration

You can't integrate for other people. You can only provide the frameworks for people to make their own connections.
—Tripp, D., 1990

Learning is not just the accumulation of new bits of information or new skills. It is the transformation of existing knowledge and skills to make them broader, more sophisticated, and more connected with the totality of the student's knowledge.
—Learning Services Team, S.D. 38 (Richmond), 1990

We know that unless the child can make sense of a situation, learning is extremely difficult or occurs not at all.... The curriculum of the home in the first three or four years of a child's life never makes the mistake of putting content before context, and that curriculum is astonishingly successful.
—Kennedy, P. and Mitchell, W., 1980, p. 8

Another important planning consideration is the need to promote personal integration—that is, providing opportunities for each student to personally connect with his or her school experiences. This involves assisting students in connecting with the curriculum in two ways.

One form of connection deals with the personal integration of knowledge—that is, in integrating new beliefs and learnings with prior knowledge. Helping students make sense of what they are learning about requires that educators provide students with challenging opportunities to explore the implications of what they are learning. It also implies that educators build upon what their students already know. It is from this point that intentions are adapted in order to extend students' knowledge.

Another kind of personal integration focuses on connecting what is learned in school with students' interests, concerns, needs and experiences outside school. This requires teachers to explore ways of making learning in school more meaningful and relevant for their students. One strategy is to appeal to students' actual or imaginative interests—to identify topics and activities that students perceive to be relevant to them. This does not mean limiting instruction to what students are currently interested in. Rather, teachers can make use of what is important to students to demonstrate the value of other forms of school learning. It may involve explaining, in ways that students can appreciate, reasons for studying certain topics. Involving students in some aspects of curricular decision making may enhance perceived relevance. It will also be appropriate to reconsider whether some of the traditional topics ought to be dropped from the curriculum, and whether students all need to encounter the same topics.

◆ Encouraging Curricular Integration

> *The kind of integration we should strive for is [...] the making of educationally meaningful connections as they arise during the study of selected content.*
>
> —Court, D., 1991, p. 8

Curricular integration—the drawing of meaningful connections among various components of the intended curriculum—is another important consideration in planning. Terminology abounds, and the best means of promoting curricular integration has been the subject of much debate. In the Intermediate Program, two types of curricular integration are encouraged: integration of content and integration of skills. Each of these can occur within and among subjects. The rationale for increasing the extent of content integration is to assist students in making sense of the many complex, interrelated dimensions of our world that cannot be adequately understood from a narrowly specialized perspective. A further related reason for integrating content is to counteract the commonly-held perception of many students that school subjects are arbitrary and fragmented divisions. The value of integrating skills lies in enhancing students' ability to apply competencies acquired in one context to other appropriate contexts.

It must be emphasized that integration simply for the sake of drawing arbitrary connections within and among subjects is not warranted educationally. Clustering various subjects within a loosely identified theme may do little to advance students' ability to apply skills or to deepen their understanding of the world. It is important, therefore, to understand the concept and forms of integration as well as the rationale. The appropriateness of encouraging curricular integration, the best strategies to use in encouraging curricular integration, and the degree to which skills or content are to be integrated are matters for teachers' professional judgment. In making decisions about curricular integration, teachers will need to take account of a variety of factors including their own expertise, the availability of resources, and students' abilities, interests, and backgrounds.

Integration within a subject implies that what is learned is learned in a more expanded context. Students are encouraged to see how particular aspects of a subject relate to the subject as a whole and to further their understanding of what gives meaning to a subject. In addition, integrating what students learn throughout the course of a given year, and from one year to the next, promotes deeper understanding of and competence in the subject. Accordingly, teachers can avoid isolating skills or concepts as discrete entities by providing opportunities for students to make meaningful connections within a given subject.

> *[These] experiences provide an opportunity for a more relevant, less fragmented, and stimulating experience for students. When properly designed and when criteria for excellence are met, then students break with a traditional view of knowledge and begin to actively foster a range of perspectives that will serve them in the larger world.*
> —Jacobs, H.H., 1989, p.10

Multidisciplinary study—integration across subject areas—can take many forms. A teacher (or a team of teachers) may select projects, issues, concepts, or topics that unify a particular subject, or "cut across" the traditional subject boundaries. For example, a theme such as "The Lives and Times of Discoverers" may involve students in researching and reporting on information from the sciences, mathematics, and humanities. Their study will likely bring them to consider the impact of discoveries in several areas of knowledge. As well as learning about individual discoverers and their discoveries, students may learn to organize and present their findings through graphic, written, and oral representations.

In the later years of the Intermediate Program, two or more teachers may investigate the possibilities for joint study of a concept such as "Form and Function." The relationship between the function of an object or work and the form it takes can provide the stimulus for planning learning opportunities in subjects as varied as literature, visual and performing art, biology, and physics. While each teacher may be working separately, there is a shared focus, and students are provided with opportunities to see how treatment of a single topic will differ among subjects. They can explore this distinctness and may also discover connections and commonalties between and among disciplines.

Opportunities for collaborative work in multidisciplinary teams offer students and teachers a number of advantages. Teachers can share resources and approaches, experiences and expertise, build a more stable and supportive learning environment, and develop complementary instructional strategies and common operational procedures. Redundancy within the curriculum can be reduced, thus maximizing opportunities for in-depth study.

Assessing, Evaluating, and Reporting on Learning

What students learn as a result of learning experiences planned on the basis of Curriculum Intentions is referred to as "attained curriculum." Assessment, evaluation, and reporting are part of an ongoing process of collaboration between students and teachers, that enables them to identify what was learned, how students work best, and how they can improve. Assessment involves gathering information about students' experiences and about what they have learned. Evaluation involves interpreting that information in order to make further curricular decisions. Reporting refers to the communicating of student learning to students and parents/guardians.

In the learning environment, assessment, evaluation, and reporting are embedded in activities and in the interactions between students and teachers: they are part of the learning experience. They provide as clear and comprehensive a picture as possible of what has been learned, and also of what happened during the learning. The overriding aim is to support and enhance student learning—to provide the link between current learning experiences and the planning of new learning opportunities. In addition, this approach to assessment, evaluation and reporting is designed to

- seek authentic evidence of what students can do, determining their strengths and needs through a variety of methods
- enhance the ability of teachers and students to make informed instructional decisions, set goals, and plan learning experiences, based on authentic evidence
- provide a basis for describing and communicating information about students' growth and development

- provide an avenue for collaboration between students, teachers, and parents/guardians
- encourage self-evaluation and reflection
- nurture and develop in students a positive and realistic self-concept.

In the Intermediate Program, students take increasing responsibility for their own learning by helping to make decisions about what they learn, and by becoming involved in evaluation and reporting.

Gathering Information

Students need to represent their thinking and learning in some way before teachers can find out what they know or can do. Representation, therefore, becomes "evidence" of students' learning. Teachers carry out most assessment, evaluation, and reporting through naturally occurring classroom events. However, if "evidence" cannot be collected informally in a natural setting, the teacher may have to structure more formal situations wherein a student, or a small group of students, can demonstrate their learning. Documenting student progress in relation to the intended curriculum and student learning in all Goal areas requires teachers to gather multiple forms of evidence, using a variety of methods:

- observation of students, their performances, and their processes for learning,
- discussion and conferencing with students,
- collection of samples of student work.

A Legacy For Learners

...Teachers should base their evaluations on a multiplicity of evidence, including participation by students in classroom discussions, project work, and one-on-one interviews in addition to written exercises and tests.

—Sullivan, B., et al, 1988, p. 111

Authentic assessment and evaluation give teachers continuous information and help them validate instructional decisions.

The nature of the particular learning experience may determine the method for gathering the related assessment information. For example, if teachers wish to focus on attitude, a survey or conference might be most appropriate. If the focus is on process, the most effective approach may be to have students verbalize their thoughts, allow time for teacher analysis, then engage in a conference. If the focus is on cooperative skills, a peer observation and self-evaluation strategy might best provide evidence of learning. If the focus is on acquired understanding, teachers may choose to analyse student work and extend their assessment by asking students to reflect and comment on their thinking. Conversely, the method of assessment may determine the nature of the learning experience. For example, if the focus is on the ability to evaluate the work of others, learning opportunities must be designed to let students critique the work of their peers.

Observation

Observation is the purposeful and systematic attention to student behaviours, processes, and performances during the learning experience. It is a natural part of teaching and provides a wealth of useful information. Teachers observe students as they learn in caring and supportive environments. Structured observation enables teachers to focus on processes students use, patterns in their developmental growth, and actual student performance as they demonstrate their skills and abilities. What students have learned can be observed and analysed through their representations and performances. As they represent their learning in a variety of ways (e.g., using objects to solve problems, painting, writing, giving an oral presentation, or debating), students communicate their thinking and learning.

Discussion and Conferencing

Discussion and conferencing can help the student extend and enhance thinking and learning. Ongoing dialogue between the teacher and student may take the form of casual conversation, interactions during a learning experience, or a formal conference at a predetermined time and place. Discussion and conferencing enable teachers to gain insights into students' interests, attitudes, competencies, and perceptions of their own abilities. They also provide opportunities for the teacher to give feedback about learning. Such dialogue is useful when seeking information about the processes students use, and in discussing collections or portfolios of student work. Dialogue allows teachers to confirm their observations and to work with students to establish new objectives and plan further learning opportunities.

Collections of Student Work

Collections of student work, gathered by the teacher or student over time, provide a rich array of information and evidence of learning. A variety of time-management and organizational strategies can facilitate assessment and evaluation. Teachers determine their own ways of organizing information, maintaining records, and compiling collections of student work. Observation notes, card files, mark books, summaries of classroom activities, and conference records are examples of ways teachers collect and organize information.

Assuming the major responsibility for keeping and maintaining collections of their work is a way for students to take ownership of the assessment process. This is particularly significant in the later years of the Intermediate Program, where teachers are typically responsible for greater numbers of students.

When collections of work are seen as only that—compilations of work done—they are of little value to the student or the teacher in supporting and enhancing learning. When students and teachers develop portfolios that consist of a judicious sampling of work done, however, collections become an integral part of learning. It is the substance of the portfolio that is important, not the form. In collaboration with or at the request of their teachers, students select work samples, observations, conference notes, and anecdotal comments they feel are representative of their learning, and which are in accordance with the particular criteria set. Not only do these samples of student work reflect the Curriculum Intentions, but the activity of making a collection and critically selecting samples of work also addresses the Goals of the Intermediate Program. A portfolio must contain evidence of reflection and self-evaluation, as this represents the student's efforts to learn about learning. Reflection and self-evaluation offer a concrete way for students to learn to value their own work, and by extension, to value themselves as learners.

Collections and portfolios enable students, teachers, and parents/guardians to

- see students' learning develop over time and relate new learnings to previous understanding
- diagnose students' strengths and developmental needs
- develop a continuing "baseline" or starting point for students to set their own goals
- see the variety of ways in which students represent their learning
- value students' work and help students acquire feelings of competence from seeing their work develop
- gain information to support planning and decision making
- communicate with greater understanding among themselves and with other teachers, schools, or districts.

Interpreting Information and Making Curricular and Instructional Decisions

Teachers reflect upon, analyse, and interpret the evidence obtained through assessment before making decisions. As part of the interpretive process, teachers (as individuals or in consultation with their colleagues) use their experience and expertise, knowledge of students, and understanding of development. This process often involves asking questions such as, "What performance or achievement can I expect?" or "Is it appropriate to expect...?" or "When can I expect...?" Teachers' expectations are often derived from looking at a student's work in relation to that of the whole class or several classes, from previous experience with students of similar ages, from the teacher's knowledge of the subject, and from other references. This can be done consciously, but may be done based upon impressions and experiences internalized over time. Teachers hold these expectations in mind when interpreting observations and other evidence.

Much of this interpretation may be the result of comparing the performance of an individual student to that of other students in the same group. In the Intermediate Program, however, such comparisons should not be made. Reference to traits and general patterns of growth and development obtained from larger groups of learners at the provincial level are appropriate. These trends, when supported by student work samples that reflect a variety and scope of possible performance, become expectations of what might be anticipated for particular age ranges.

Resources that can help teachers interpret evidence of students' learning from a developmental perspective, for example in areas such as writing and problem solving, are currently being developed with direction from the Ministry. These "Reference Sets" are merely a resource whose use is optional.

"Reference Sets" provide a backdrop and represent additional information that is intended to

- describe general developmental patterns and expectations
- help teachers and students determine appropriate challenges and establish realistic expectations of performance
- help teachers and students set goals and plan further learning opportunities.

It is important to remember that when making generalizations about development and learning, a wide range of individual variation is normal and to be expected. Patterns of development are not discrete "markers." Because growth and development is not necessarily linear and sequential, these "Reference Sets" do not prescribe what students should be doing at any given age. Rather, their use is appropriate in the context of a particular learning situation. In addition, if "Reference Sets" are the sole source of information, or are used without regard to learning contexts, they may limit what a teacher looks for and what students strive for. Students' competencies may be underestimated, and unforeseen achievements may be overlooked.

Many times students bring aspects of their learning to my attention that I wouldn't have seen if I had been the only evaluator.

—Schwartz, J., 1991, p. 67

At some time and for some students (e.g., those with special needs), norm-referenced procedures may be necessary in order to gain a clearer understanding of an individual student's learning and enable teachers to make more informed curricular and instructional decisions.

Reflection and self-evaluation are processes students can use for interpreting their learning. They help students review their learning to notice what has been learned and how it has been learned. These processes enable students to understand how they learn best and to gain knowledge of their own patterns of growth and development. Reflection and self-evaluation are skills that facilitate lifelong learning. Students develop the language of assessment as they ask such questions as, "Where did I start?", "What have I learned?", and "Where do I go next?"

Student self-evaluation gives the teacher insight into the skills, processes, and strategies students use in their learning. It also gives the teacher insight into their social and emotional growth. The information thus gained by the teacher can also be used as part of the evidence of learning. Overall, the teacher's perspective regarding students' capabilities is broadened. In addition, as students reflect collaboratively with their peers, extending beyond themselves and experiencing other students' learning preferences, the social nature of learning is emphasized.

As a consequence of interpretation, teachers are able to make new curricular decisions about future student learning. As part of the process of making decisions and using professional judgments in this regard, teachers need to consider many factors such as the needs, interests and abilities of the student, and the Goals, Curriculum Intentions, and Principles of the Program. In this way, assessment and evaluation become a link between the intended curriculum and the actual experiences of the students.

Reporting Student Learning

> 4. (2) Reports referred to subsection (1)(j) shall be made at least 5 times during the school year as follows:
>   (a) 3 written reports, one of which shall be at the end of the school year
>   (i) on a form approved by the minister, or
>   (ii) on a form approved by the board containing information and, when required, using reporting symbols ordered or approved by the minister;
>   (b) at least 2 informal reports.
>
> —*School Regulation*

In the Intermediate Program, reporting means more than writing reports. It should involve ongoing and frequent communication and interaction among teachers, students, and parents/guardians. It should also

- support and enhance learning, by reflecting the Program Goals, the Program Principles, and the Curriculum Intentions
- describe student learning
- recognize and show evidence of accomplishments, growth, and development
- identify strengths and describe what students can do
- identify concerns and provide guidance for future learning
- provide opportunities for student involvement
- build learners' self-confidence and self-esteem.

Communication with students means that they receive feedback and guidance to help in future learning. As they assume more responsibility for their own learning, students

> *We found most parent responses to be thoughtful and positive [....] For the first time many students sat down with their parents and explained what learning they were proud of and, in turn, listened to their reaction [....] Together, teachers and parents can recognize successes and give guidance for continued success. The benefits to student self-esteem and confidence are immeasurable, to say nothing of the effect this will have on enhancing the process of making learning worthwhile and enjoyable.*
>
> —Principal, School District 62 (Sooke), *SnapShots*, 1991, p. 5

can be involved in reporting, whether to the teacher, their peers, or their parents/guardians. By sharing some of this responsibility, teachers are able to act as facilitators, enabling students to reflect on and make decisions about their learning. This sharing of responsibility can reduce the pressures of reporting.

Communication with parents/guardians involves continuous and varied exchange of information. This communication is facilitated and enhanced by reporting to parents/guardians in different ways, depending upon the situation, the needs of the student and parent/guardian, availability of time, and number of student contacts. Ways of reporting to parents/guardians may include the following:

Informal reporting

- informal conversations
- telephone calls
- notes and letters
- samples of student's work (portfolios)
- student journals and self-evaluations
- classroom visits
- interim reports

Formal reporting

- written reports

Conferencing/Interviewing

- teacher-led
- student-led

The Intermediate Program emphasizes the developmental and continuous nature of learning. If reporting is to reflect this, assumptions about how and when to report need to be re-examined. For example, teachers might choose to report formally throughout a term rather than viewing reporting as a single major event.

The significance of written reports is considerable. A comment made verbally to a student takes on greater significance when written, and even more significance when written in an official document. The appropriateness of written reference to general patterns of growth and development therefore needs to be carefully considered. When describing learning, reference to the performance of other students in the same class should not be made.

◆ Informal Reporting

Informal contacts provide a basis for ongoing dialogue between the home and the school. It is not intended that informal reporting be an arduous, time-consuming process for the teacher, but that this form of communication become part of the routine of the educational experience. The nature, variety, and frequency of informal communication with parents/guardians should be determined on the basis of need and as practical considerations allow. Informal reporting may take the form of a telephone call, a conference, notes and letters, or written interim reports.

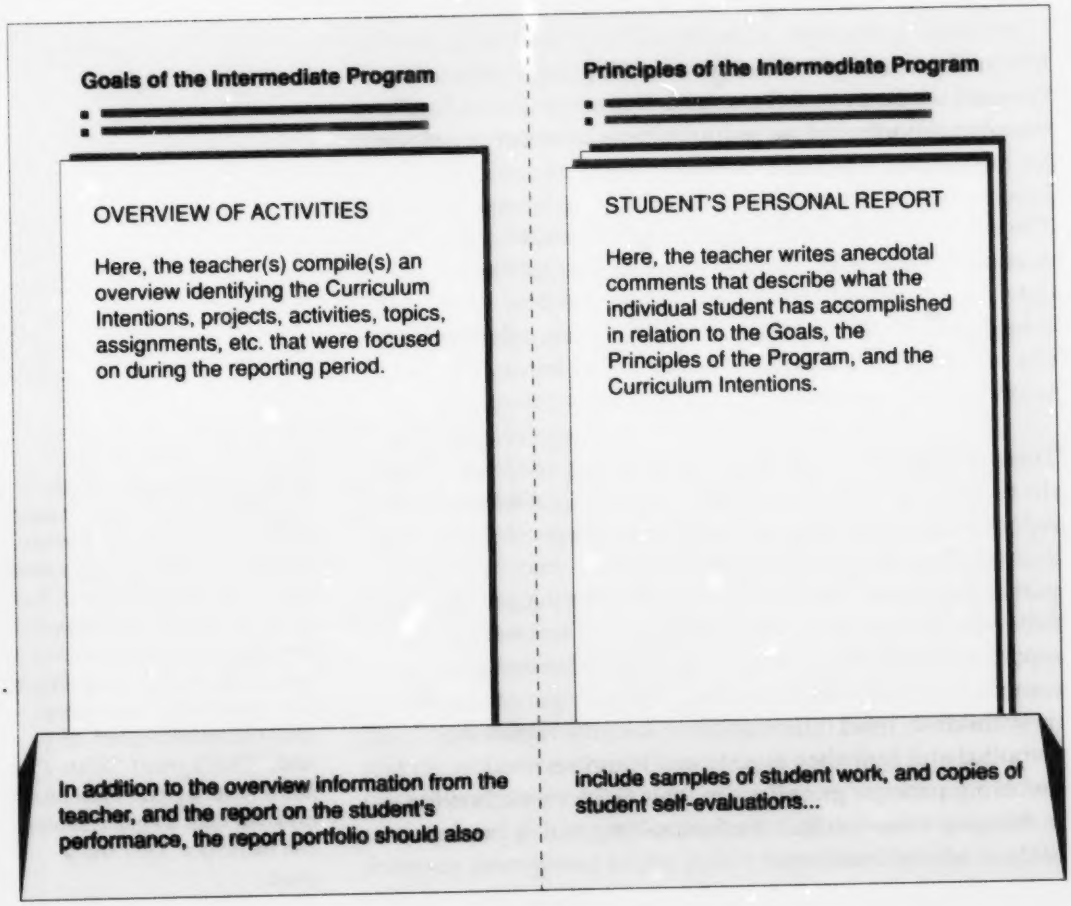
There are many opportunities for involving students under the teacher's guidance in informal reporting. An interim report, for example, may take the form of a portfolio or journal compiled by teacher and student. It may be seen as part of the evaluation process and done during class time. Self-evaluations may be an integral part of an interim report, and parents/guardians can also be invited to comment on their child's learning. Parents/guardians, like their children, need information on how the report was compiled and how they might view it and respond. Involving parents/guardians in their children's schooling in this way enhances their understanding and appreciation of the students' learning.

> *When I brought my interim report home I wasn't even sure if I wanted to give my parents my report because I didn't think that it was anything great. But when my parents sat down and started to examine it I started to see a smile on their faces. Before I even got to ask them if they liked my interim report, they said, "That's great!" When I heard them say that I just about exploded with laughter, smiles, and thank-you. I felt really great.*
>
> —Student, *Snapshots*, 1991, p. 4

◆ Formal Reporting

Optimally, it is envisioned that formal reporting could be purely anecdotal for all years of the Intermediate Program. Reporting in this way might be illustrated as follows:

Sample Form for Anecdotal Reporting



Goals of the Intermediate Program

OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITIES

Here, the teacher(s) compile(s) an overview identifying the Curriculum Intentions, projects, activities, topics, assignments, etc. that were focused on during the reporting period.

Principles of the Intermediate Program

STUDENT'S PERSONAL REPORT

Here, the teacher writes anecdotal comments that describe what the individual student has accomplished in relation to the Goals, the Principles of the Program, and the Curriculum Intentions.

In addition to the overview information from the teacher, and the report on the student's performance, the report portfolio should also include samples of student work, and copies of student self-evaluations...

In the space for comments regarding the individual student, teachers would report on development in relation to the Curriculum Intentions and the Goals of the Intermediate Program. Hence, either the teacher who works with the same group of students for the majority of the time, or the subject specialist, describes student growth using common referents; only the classroom context for the comments changes. It is not expected that the teacher will necessarily report specifically on every Goal during a given reporting period. It is expected, however, that during the course of a school year, all Goals will be addressed. It is that shared context which can provide reassurance to parents/guardians that there is consistency in reporting across the Province.

The writers recognize that at the time of writing this draft, acknowledgment must be made regarding the need for gradual transition from what has become standard or "traditional" practices for reporting, toward practice that will be more consistent with the intents of the Intermediate Program. In some schools and districts, educators are now using anecdotal reporting and may wish to continue doing so. In other places, students, parents/guardians, and educators have expressed the desire to retain practices and procedures they are familiar with.

Therefore, until such time as there is a shared understanding and a broad base of support for agreement regarding the kind and form of reporting deemed appropriate, Ministerial Orders offer School Boards choice in the matter.

Consistent with the principle of continuous learning, official written reports provide information about the student's accomplishments, growth, and development up to the time the report is written. A report should not represent learning as an "average amount of progress and/or an average number of accomplishments" over the reporting period. Reports written with sensitivity to the learner's needs can play an important role in building self-confidence and improving self-esteem. Formal reports, as official records of student progress, provide information that may assist educators with future decision making.

When reporting on student learning, teachers can consider

- major strengths and successes
- the Intermediate Program Goals, the Principles, and the Curriculum Intentions
- including specific examples of work
- identifying difficulties and outlining plans to support future learning
- growth and development
- suggestions for parental support
- the student's interests and attitudes
- including student self-evaluation.

Reporting facilitates communication when it is

- in appropriate language and free of jargon
- constructive and non-judgmental
- linked to classroom experiences and subject contexts
- focused on young people
- sensitive to home environments.

Anecdotal comments provide descriptive information to parents/guardians about student learning, development, and performance. The comments offer a means of improving the accuracy and completeness of information on student accomplishment and they recognize the complexity of the experiences to which they refer.

Computer software resources can help teachers collect and organize information about student progress and may help in the reporting process. For example, observational notes can be electronically stored and retrieved for reference when anecdotal comments are written. The use of pre-programmed comments, however, is inappropriate in the

Intermediate Program, as they do not take account of the individual's unique learning and development.

Although useful to teachers as a way of collecting, organizing, or analyzing information, checklists are not usually appropriate reporting devices. Checklists tend to fragment assessment and evaluation and focus on isolated (and sometimes less important) aspects of the whole. Checklists fail to indicate the relative importance of items to each other and to the whole. They tend to draw attention to what the student has not accomplished, rather than reporting and building on what students can do. While checklists may help teachers to identify strengths and weaknesses, these can be more accurately conveyed using descriptive language.

The writing of anecdotal reports necessitates having a clear purpose and effective writing skills in order to convey the complexity of student learning. Accurate and meaningful anecdotal reports provide parents/guardians with important information about their children and help build trusting relationships between the student, teacher, and parent/guardian. Through this reporting process, parents/guardians are invited to become full partners in education.

At the same time, teachers need to recognize the practical limitations of writing anecdotal reports. The use of a variety of assessment and evaluation methods and resources provides a comprehensive picture of the complex processes of learning. Such an understanding of the student, however, cannot be adequately conveyed through three written reports each year. These written summaries provide only part of the full dialogue about students' learning. Supplementary forms of reporting such as conferencing can provide parents/guardians or students with the detail they might require.

The use of symbols alone to report student learning is incompatible with a learner-focused perspective. When Boards elect to use symbols in the early years of the Program, or are required to use them in the later years, the symbols should not be portrayed as norms. To the extent that symbols can be learner-focussed, criterion-referencing is mandated. It is the process of arriving at the symbol that is important, involving negotiation and discussion of criteria with students. It is inappropriate to use symbols that are norm-referenced or that represent averaging in several areas and/or over time. Symbols are not intended to be judgments about the students, but rather judgments about their learning. They should accordingly be based upon such things as predetermined criteria and information derived from reference sets and student work.

Symbols cannot communicate the full evidence of learning that has taken place, nor do they provide information that supports further learning. While a concise means of communicating student learning is needed, symbols reduce the complexity of the accomplishments of learners, and oversimplification occurs. The symbols may be given overweighted significance; parents/guardians and students may accept them as unchangeable and unquestionable and rate students' abilities accordingly. Using symbols to compare students has the potential for "labelling," which may lead to negative effects on learner self-esteem, reduce motivation, and seriously impede achievement. While the pursuit of a higher symbol may motivate a student, the symbol often becomes the goal, not the learning. The true value of learning becomes extraneous and is lost as attainment of the symbol becomes central.

◆ Conferencing/Interviewing

Formal conferences or interviews may be desirable at various times throughout the school year. A conference or interview may be led by the teacher, with or without the student, or by the student, with the teacher acting as a facilitator. Using student work to supplement the discussion can provide clarity about what the student is doing in school. It also shows evidence of growth and development, and provides an avenue for communication. Conferences are more than simply a forum for the teacher to describe student achievement and progress: they have structure and purpose. Skillful questioning, listening, and responding to questions, within a climate of trust and caring, can lead to benefits for all participants. Conferences and interviews are important sources of information about the student and a means of encouraging a three-way partnership in the learning process.

Student-led conferences can validate student learning and be a learning experience in themselves. They are a natural extension of self-evaluation. By accepting responsibility for reporting progress to their parents/guardians, students learn to organize their work and be accountable for it. Further, student-led conferences provide opportunities for young people to develop skills and abilities such as communication, critical analysis, and decision making. Such experiences enhance their self-esteem and empower them as learners.

> *It seemed that [teachers'] initial concerns [about student-led conferences] of increased workload, rejection by parents, and resistance by the students had not been problems. The teachers had found that their students really could do the job themselves.*
>
> —Little, A.W. (Nancy) and Allen, J., 1989, p. 216

A COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS

WITHIN THE INTERMEDIATE PROGRAM

[illegible]

Creating a Community of Learners

> *The collective attitude of the [school staff] is the reflection of the values and beliefs of the individual professionals. It determines the culture of the school, its ethos. The students learn readily what their school stands for. The curriculum of climate is as important as the curriculum of content. The school's clout, its power, resides more in this culture than its content. The school itself is a teacher.*
>
> —Lounsbury, J. M., 1990, p. 4

A school is more than a physical structure; it is the embodiment of the attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours of the people who learn and work there. Students, their families, educators, support staff, and members of the community all contribute to the creation of school culture and a feeling of community.

Each school's distinct culture is reflected in interconnected elements that form the school community. These elements may include

- the way the learning environment is organized
- the nature of relationships between and among all those involved with the school
- the attitudes toward learners and learning.

These interconnected components emerge in different forms within school communities. The focus of school is the students and their success in learning. Caring, supportive school communities attend to the physical, emotional, social, and intellectual needs of all those who are involved with the school; educationally rich environments are based upon sound principles of learning, instruction, and evaluation. It is the composite of these components, brought to life by the members of those communities, that makes some schools places where people want to be.

Creating a community of learners means extending opportunities to learn beyond the classroom to other parts of the school and its surroundings. Learning takes place in multiple venues with multiple resources. Within Intermediate Program settings, students might learn by conducting science experiments on the school grounds, by using the equipment in computer stations, or by doing research in the library resource centre. Parents and community members may be involved, among other things, in helping teachers and students undertake field trips, community activities, and career exploration programs.

In a community of learners, teachers increasingly share the responsibility for the learning process with students. As a result, today's classrooms may look different from those of previous generations. At any one time, one might expect to see

- grouping arrangements that promote learning through peer cooperation
- students and teachers negotiating assignments, discussing ways of representing their learning, or developing criteria for evaluation
- students leading conferences with their teacher and/or their parents/guardians
- an individual student reviewing a personal collection of work to make selections for a portfolio.

Such activities do not mean that "teaching" has disappeared or that structure has been abandoned. Learning is apparent in the interaction and patterns of activities in a classroom community and in the purposefulness of the activities.

> One lesson plan for all each day, one sequence for all each year—that is not to structure more; that is simply to let a single structure monopolize the learning field. This monopoly prevents individ-ualization and makes it difficult for learners to develop judgement, which requires that they be structuring in school, not structured by school. Structuring is choosing. Judgement is choosing. Comprehending, composing, making sense of the world—these are structuring.
>
> —Moffett, J., and Wagner, B.J., 1983, p. 28

Helping students to develop a secure sense of self, form positive relationships, and participate in the community enables these learners to develop their ability to make decisions and become increasingly responsible for their actions. To foster this development, many educators are considering how to structure the learning environment in order that teachers may know their students well and provide the guidance and educational support that young people require.

Organizing Classrooms

The practice of grouping students by ability for instructional purposes is not supported by research. Even though a majority of teachers believes that ability grouping improves the effectiveness of schooling, the studies reviewed suggest that the practice has deleterious effects on teacher expectations and instructional practices, (especially for students in lower ability groups), student perceptions of self and others, and academic performance of lower ability students.

—Johnston, J.H., &
Markle, G.C., 1986

In response to the Intermediate Program's emphasis on student growth and development, educators may decide that changes to present classroom organization are required. The focus on learners as individuals, and the emphasis on enabling them to develop self-esteem suggests the need for flexible grouping practices that will support these intents. The aim of groupings that vary in size, composition, and duration should be to support the active and maximum participation of students. Many of the Program Goals and Principles may be addressed by attending to the ways in which students are grouped. Variations in the formation and duration of groups reflect different intentions and purposes. Some groups may be in place for the length of a project; other groupings are temporary and may change to reflect the flow of a lesson.

Whether students work individually, in pairs, in small groups, or in large groups, learning should be supported by the grouping arrangement. In some situations, students may work independently to write a story or to research and evaluate information from a database. Working alone gives time for personal exploration, study, and reflection. At other times, students may work in pairs or small groups to investigate and solve problems, clarify individual understanding, share strategies, or prepare presentations.

Working within a smaller group increases the participation of all students in these processes. In a large group setting, the sharing of an experience may provide a point of departure for students to pursue their individual interests. Students may become engaged in learning through a common experience such as viewing a film, going on a field trip, observing a science demonstration, or listening to a guest speaker. As well, students may work in a large group when presenting their learning to an audience or when evaluating and reflecting on their learning.

Groups may be formed on the basis of interest, friendship, or common instructional needs. Interest groups usually form for the duration of a project and often disband once the project is complete. In many instances, however, the friendships and sense of belonging that develop through the exploration of a common interest endure. Groupings that support the formation of friendships have the potential to contribute to the emotional and social development of young people. Effective groups do not require that all members possess the same abilities or developmental maturity. When students work together to plan field trips or organize projects, they may learn to appreciate each other.

Homogeneous ability groups have a function within the Intermediate Program. Occasionally drawing together students with similar skills or abilities can help young people feel positive about themselves and enjoy learning. Young people who are identified as intellectually gifted, for example, can benefit from opportunities to work with others of similar abilities. Likewise, students who are having difficulty with a specific skill may be brought together as a small group to focus on strengthening that skill. While these arrangements can temporarily serve to meet specific needs, assigning students to homogeneous ability groups for the majority of their schooling experiences does not appear to be productive.

Heterogeneous grouping enables students with varied interests, abilities, and development to share their experiences and learning. Cooperative learning is used effectively in many schools to group students of diverse abilities and backgrounds.

Organizing Schools

Like decisions with respect to curricular planning, choosing assessment and evaluation strategies, or selecting learning resources, decisions regarding organization are made to benefit students and to support their learning.

In the early years of the Intermediate Program, teachers are generally responsible for the education of a single group of students. Reorganization of the school structure to promote student development and self-esteem may not be necessary. Some schools, however, may undertake changes that affect how students are grouped within some or all classrooms.

To increase the possibility of developing supportive relationships between students and teachers in all years of the Program, some schools have adopted organizations such as

- multi-age groupings
- house systems or "schools within a school"
- "mini-schools"
- teaching teams
- teacher-advisor programs.

While these types of organization are not restricted to later Intermediate settings, they are, with the exception of multi-age classrooms, most thoroughly discussed within the literature on the "transition years" of early adolescence. These practices have been recommended as a means of helping adolescents feel "at home" within their school and of building collaborative and cooperative communities.

Some schools in British Columbia have chosen to organize students into **multi-aged groupings** for instructional purposes and to promote a positive school environment. Educators within these settings feel that grade levels or chronological groupings of students are not necessarily the most appropriate organizations for a learner-focused approach to education. Within multi-age classrooms, opportunities to engage in continuous learning may be enhanced. In multi-age classrooms, students may regularly assist each other with their work and thereby develop a greater sense of responsibility for the learning that occurs. For many educators, these social benefits are one of the greatest advantages offered by multi-age groupings.

The use of multi-age groupings does not necessarily require a permanent, whole-school restructuring. Multi-age groupings may simply be a feature of "mini-schools," house systems, or teacher-advisor programs. As well, schools may choose to organize students into multi-age groupings for certain activities or events that take place within the school year.

A reconsideration of school structures may pose particular challenges for educators who are working with students in the later years of the Intermediate Program. Timetables are embedded within educational practice as the means of organizing learning. Scheduling practices such as fragmented timetables in elementary classrooms or the commonly used 5 X 8 timetable limit flexibility. They may also require each teacher to teach over 200 students. When the number of student contacts is high, the possibility of developing relationships is remote.

I am teaching a double block. I have the kids for twice as long in the week, plus I have a half if not a third or two-thirds less kids than I would normally have. So by the end of the year I know them intimately and know their strengths and their weaknesses and what they have done and what they haven't done. They become people at reporting time rather than a culmination of a bunch of numbers on a page...

—Teacher, Booth Memorial,
Developing Images video,
1991

Smaller schools are often suggested as a means of promoting feelings of community among staff and students (Hargreaves, A. and Earl, L. 1990, p. 82). At the same time, however, the financial burden arising from the need for more schools and the problems that small schools face in providing diverse offerings to students may make this an impractical option. Instead, what is often recommended is the creation of smaller organizational groups for learning.

In the United States and Britain, **house systems** or **"schools within a school"** have been used to subdivide a school population. Teachers and students belong to one of three or four houses, and teachers teach only those students who are within the same house (although students may leave this arrangement for some classes). Houses are heterogeneously grouped to represent cultural, intellectual, and social diversity. Students and teachers either remain within the same house throughout their time in school or shift into different arrangements every year.

Several schools in British Columbia currently use a house system to promote feelings of belonging or to organize participation in school activities, but do not group all students and teachers on this basis. The **mini-school** is an alternate method of grouping students within a larger student population. In schools that have adopted this arrangement, a team of teachers may take responsibility for the education of a number of students of different ages. Students usually have applied to participate in the mini-school and have been accepted according to certain criteria. The mini-school concept does not address the issue of restructuring the school as a whole. However, the experiences of educators who have worked within these settings is invaluable to those who are thinking of restructuring.

Teaching teams involve having several teachers assume responsibility for the same group of students. For example, four teachers may teach Humanities and Sciences to a single group of students. The advantages of this system are that teachers may plan together, share concerns about individual students, and coordinate their activities and experiences. Students may consequently experience a more coherent overall program. Provision of common planning time for all members contributes to the success of team teaching.

Some teachers work in inter-disciplinary or multidisciplinary teams within the strand organization of the Intermediate Program. In this organizational structure, a teacher might teach Humanities, which would incorporate topics from social studies, Language Arts English, and Learning for Living. While the strand organization may be a convenient means of organizing for some teachers, others may prefer to plan learning activities that integrate drama and Language Arts English, for example. The strand organization is neither meant to direct how teams might be formed, nor to restrict the ways in which team members work together.

A Legacy For Learners

> *...schools—especially those with young adolescents—should keep to a minimum the number of different teachers who work with students in any given year. We believe that teachers at this level should be expected to teach at least two different subjects to each class they meet. A second arrangement, now employed in many middle schools and which we support, assigns an interdisciplinary team of teachers to different groups of students.*
>
> — Sullivan, B., et al, 1988, p. 100

Teaching Teams in Combination with Other Classroom Grouping Strategies

[illegible]

> *We also believe that students in their adolescent years benefit from a strong sense of identification with their school community and especially with adults in that community. To this end, we encourage schools to adopt some form of mentoring system such as a teacher advisor system.*
>
> — Sullivan, B., et al, 1988, p. 102

Teacher-advisor programs are intended to promote positive interpersonal relationships and enhance school culture. These programs take many different forms depending upon the specific issues they address. For example, to ease transition between early Intermediate and later Intermediate school settings, students may be placed in teacher-advisor groups on the basis of age. Another school may form multi-age groups to promote positive interaction between younger and older students. Teacher-adviser groups in some schools meet daily; in other schools, groups meet two or three times a week. Differences in organization are appropriate and desirable. Collaborative and collegial problem-solving processes will produce variations in the design of teacher-advisor systems in order to suit local needs.

> *Every student should be well known by at least one adult. Students should be able to rely on that adult to help learn from their experiences, comprehend physical changes and changing relations with family and peers, act on their behalf to marshal every school and community resource needed for the student to succeed, and help to fashion a promising vision of the future.*
>
> —The Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development Task Force on Education of Young Adolescents, 1989, p. 40

Common among teacher-advisor programs is the belief that there should be at least one educator within the school to whom every student can turn for support and guidance. This educator complements school counsellors who provide professional counselling services. The teacher advisor may assist with many tasks not requiring the counsellor's specialized expertise. Personal contact with an advisor may provide family members with a more accessible means of communication with the school. As well, teacher advisors who take responsibility for monitoring a student's growth and development may intervene early to avoid more serious difficulty.

School Facilities

Facilities should assist in providing an environment that makes it possible to plan learning opportunities based on the Goals and Principles of the Intermediate Program. Schools should be designed and/or adapted to reflect the direction of the Intermediate Program. This design and/or adaptation must consider the needs of the students and educators. The Intermediate Program requires, among other things, facilities that

- accommodate for a variety of different student groupings
- provide space for educators to co-plan and confer with students, parents, and colleagues
- are flexible and able to accommodate developing technologies
- support opportunities for curricular integration
- can be used for a variety of important educational purposes.

To create a community of learners, adults may contribute in different ways. Educators and members of other "stakeholder groups" must appreciate the importance of their respective roles, while recognizing that no group can achieve the goals of education in isolation. By working collaboratively, mutual respect and understanding of shared responsibility is enhanced. *Year 2000: A Framework for Learning* emphasizes the need for collaboration: "the school system is focused on three goals, in cooperation with learners' families and the community."(p.4) A community of learners supports the lifelong learning of all members of the community—students, educators, families, and members of the general public.

Schools with strong cultures tend to celebrate collegiality, collaboration risk-taking, and experimentation; they value both individuality and community.
—Lieberman, A., and Miller, L., 1990, p. 762

AFTERWORD

[illegible]

> [illegible]

[illegible]

Coming to the end of a book signifies the closing of one phase and marks the beginning of another. While writing this draft of *The Intermediate Program: Foundations,* members of the Program Team endeavored to work with many people throughout the Province to build and express a vision for schooling that is truly the result of collaboration.

The vision that has emerged is one that affirms our humanity. It is a vision that reflects the changes around us. It calls for revised ideas about schooling and for reform in education. It speaks of schools for people—shared environments where trust and caring are demonstrated, where self-esteem is nurtured, and where people want to be. It focuses on the learner and stresses a shift in emphasis from what is taught to how students learn. In this vision, schooling is viewed as "real world" experience that contributes to the lifelong learning of all.

> My hope is that educators will be moved to begin the kind of dialogue that leads to genuine reform in education, a reform that really counts. Genuine reform will require attention not only to the mission of our schools, but to their educational ecology. It will require attention not only to our intentions, but to the ways in which we organize our workplaces, to the scope of the programs that we provide, to the quality of our teaching, and to the means through which we assess what really matters.
>
> —Eisner, E.W., 1991, p. 16

The authors share Eisner's hope. The end of this draft signals new beginnings that focus on the uniqueness of each learner and the diversity among students... and that hold promise of educational excellence for every one. It is an optimistic ending/beginning that recognizes educational change is both crucial and possible and no step is too small. Enabling learners and empowering educators necessitates valuing the contributions of all.

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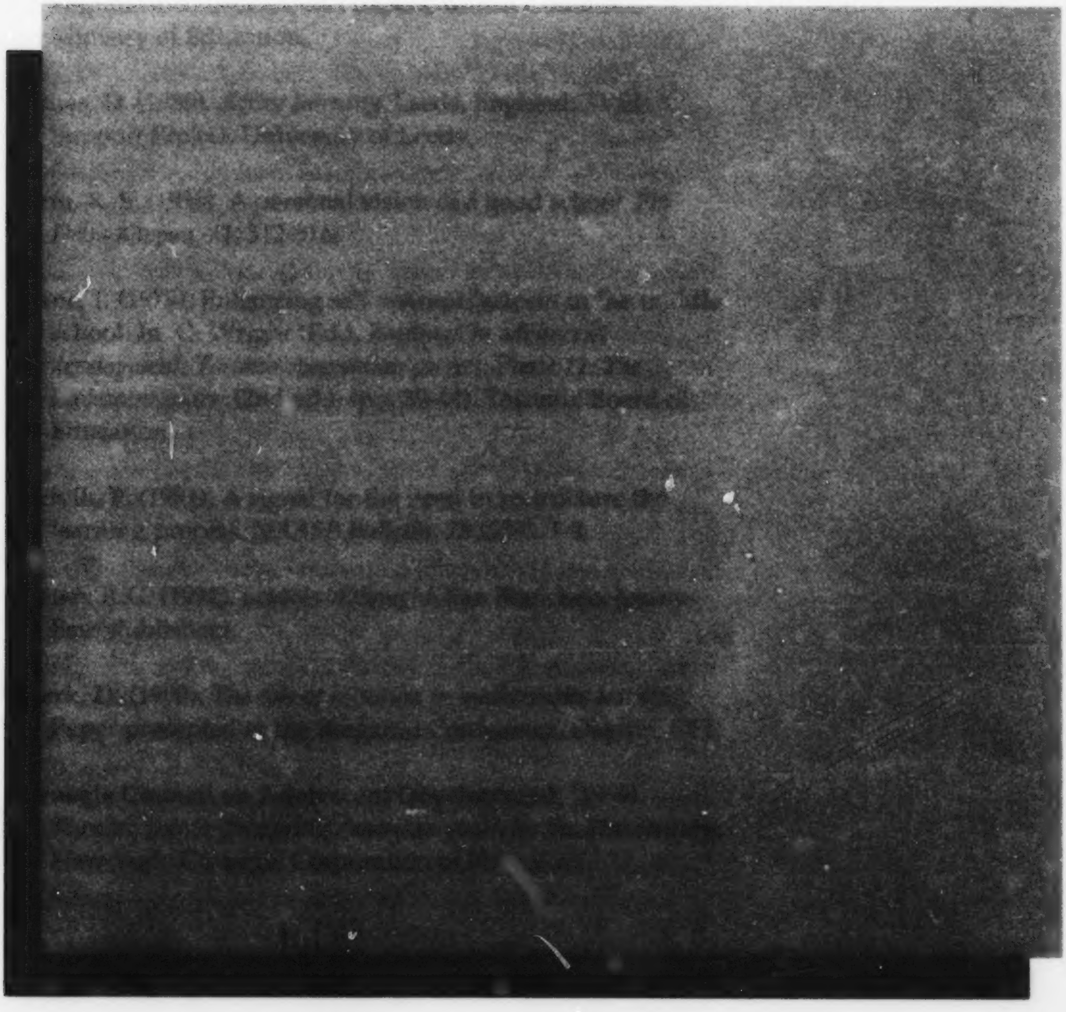

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